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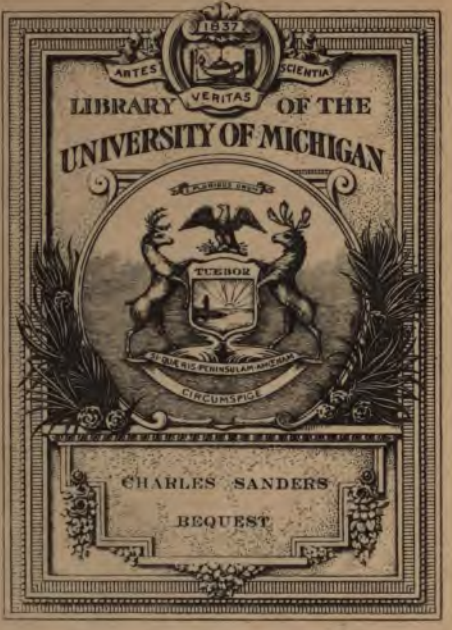
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AMUEL FOOTE, ESQ.R

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# MEMOIRS

OF

# SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

WITH

## A COLLECTION

OF HIS GENUINE

## BON-MOTS, ANECDOTES, OPINIONS, &c

MOSTLY ORIGINAL.

AND

## THREE OF HIS DRAMATIC PIECES,

Not published in his Works.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

By WILLIAM COOKE, Esq.

———"A merrier man
I never spent an hour's talk withal.
His eye begat occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one did catch,
The other turn'd to a mirth-moving jest."

SHAKSPEARE.

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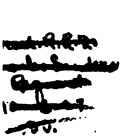

# INTRODUCTION.

INSTEAD of making an apology for writing the life of SAMUEL FOOTE, an apology should perhaps be made for not having given to the public long ago some account of this very extraordinary man; who, independently of many other talents, stands so singular as a modern dramatic writer, that even at this day we have little hopes of "looking upon his like again."

THIS neglect can only be accounted for on conjectural princi-

ples. His satirical turn, no doubt, made him many enemies, and these had an interested reason on this subject; while others, though they might have a quick relish for his wit and conversation, may not have felt themselves capable "to carry a bon-mot steadily." Some too, fully qualified for the office of a biographer, may be liable to the indolence often attendant upon genius; which proposes and procrastinates till, delay becoming habit, "the business of to-morrow" goes off "from day to day, to the last syllable of recorded time."

It is now near thirty years since

the death of Foote; and yet, except a meagre collection of a few dates and facts published in the *Biographia Dramatica* (like what we sometimes find in the miscellanies of the French poets), and since literally retailed in a number of theatrical catchpennies, no written account of him is extant. Of his jests, bon-mots, &c., there have been many professed publications; but those who are in the least acquainted with the character of Foote, must see at one view, that in these his name has been merely adopted to deceive the crowd, who know not how to discriminate *sterling* from *adulterated metal.*

It was from seeing this literary object in so perishable a state, and from wishing to preserve a name of such celebrity from floating down the tide of oblivion, that the present Editor has been induced to publish these Memoirs: but it is now necessary for him to state his own pretensions.

Very early in life he had the pleasure of being introduced to this genuine son of comic humour; and finding in him all the charms of conversation which could attach a young man with a literary and lively turn of mind, he was careful in recollecting and noting down as many

of his anecdotes, conversations, bon-mots, &c., as convenience would permit: not with any intent, at that time, to publish them; but as the records of a man who drew on him the gaze of the fashionable and literary world,—as the reminiscences of hours which afforded such exquisite delight.

On the death of Foote, which happened about nine years after their first acquaintance, the Editor had the pleasure of continuing in acquaintance with many respectable persons who were the intimates of his late friend's earlier days, and who had seen him in all the situations of his

varied life. From these he was curious to glean as much of his manners, habits, and conversation, as he could; and from their readiness to oblige, as well as from the researches of an old and valuable friend (whose name, which he is not permitted to mention here, would be a passport for every thing curious or authentic in literary or dramatic history), he has collected such materials as embolden him to publish these volumes. He is at the same time ready to allow that the work might have been more enlarged, had it been begun immediately after the death of Foote, by some of those cotemporaries here alluded to; when

the ardour of congenial talents, and the raciness of events, would have made greater and more forcible impressions: but under the actual circumstances, he not only presumes that his performance will be found the best that has yet appeared, but is rather sanguine in thinking it the best that can *now* be effected.

THE first part consists of Memoirs of Foote; in which every thing material relative to his life and dramatic pursuits is accurately stated, from written documents and the best traditional information.

IN the second will be found a

collection of his bon-mots, &c. Some of these have appeared in other collections: but such as had the similitude of being genuine have been admitted; the Editor not thinking himself at liberty to refuse them a place here, merely because they had been involuntarily dragged into bad company.

Of the characters, anecdotes, opinions, &c., most were related by Foote himself, and many by the literary society in which he lived. Some, being either referred to in the range of conversation, or growing out of a corresponding subject, the

Editor thought fit to subjoin, from a wish to give to the original matter a richness of appropriate colouring and diversification.

In short, *this* part may be considered not only as the *school of Foote*, but of his time: where the hero is discovered among his friends and cotemporaries "in his night-gown and slippers;" where the wit, the whim, the humour, the taste, and general character, of the man will be best seen; and where perhaps will be found the best apology for many parts of his life; as "he who had such jocular propensities, with such

inexhaustible sources for pleasing mankind, could have no serious views of ever becoming their enemy."

W. COOKE.

Half Moon Street,
August, 1805.

# MEMOIRS

OF

# SAMUEL FOOTE.

OF the uses of biography so much has been already said, that it is almost *unnecessary* to add to the number of encomiasts. Theoretic writers only lay down rules by which mankind may be instructed by precept; but biography describes events, not as they *might* but as they actually *have* happened; facts, not hypotheses: so that, as in a chart, where the different coasts are delineated, here we have the several virtues and vices of the individual, to serve us as so many

marks of direction through the eventual voyage of human life.

The subject of these memoirs adds to the above advantages a degree of *novelty* rarely to be met with in the general classes of mankind. He not only stands an *unique*, as a modern dramatic author, but may be considered equally so, in the circles of wit, humour, and brilliant conversation. Other comic writers have merely shown "the body of the time its general form and pressure," but Foote has soared beyond this common flight, he has adventured to drag the objects of vice and folly individually before the public, and with a kind of dramatic boldness (unknown to any stage since the days of Aristophanes) to punish the delinquents in the first instance, as a warning to others: and here he has, gene-

rally, so regulated his satire, that although a single character may now and then be distinguished, it seems to embrace a whole genus.

We do not however wholly vindicate this talent. For though there are some enormities which the laws of their country cannot reach, the laws of the STAGE may be supposed to do with some advantage to society; yet there are persons whose little peculiarities of temper and constitution (however they may subject them to remark,) are so blended with blameless manners, and a good heart, as should shield them from wanton and cruel aggressions. Authors of this stamp we do not pretend to excuse; we are writing the life of a man, not an apology for his life; as biography would be worse than useless to mankind, if it did not operate as an ex-

ample of reproof, as well as of approbation. It must therefore speak for itself. Yet thus much we will venture to say, that allowing for some instances of ill directed satire, taking Foote in general as a *dramatic writer*, an *actor*, a *wit*, an *humourist*, and *lively companion*, he stands on so high a scale of eminence, that all must exclaim, "This was a most extraordinary man!"

Samuel Foote was born at Truro, in Cornwall, about the year 1720: his father, John Foote, was a very useful magistrate of that county, and enjoyed the posts of commissioner of the prize office and fine contract. His mother (descended in the female line from the old Earl of Rutland) was the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, bart., who represented the county of Hereford in parliament

for several years, and brought Mr. Foote a large fortune, which she principally acquired from the following unhappy circumstance.

This lady had two surviving brothers (out of six), Sir John Dinely Goodere, bart., and Samuel Goodere, Captain of his Majesty's ship the Ruby. A disagreement, from what cause it is now difficult to trace, arose between the two brothers, which induced Sir John to cut off the entail of his estates, (except seven hundred per year, which he could not assign,) and settle them on his sister's family. This, of course, widened the breach; and the brothers, in consequence, had not spoken to each other for several years.

Matters were in this train (January 1741) when the two brothers arrived by accident at Bristol, Sir

John upon a party of pleasure, and Samuel as commander of his ship, (the Ruby,) then lying in King's-road; when the latter hearing that Sir John was to dine at Mr. Jarrit Smith's, a respectable attorney, on College Green, Bristol, on the Sunday following, he earnestly requested of that gentleman to admit him as a guest on the same day, in order to reconcile himself to his brother; saying, at the same time, "that the difference had subsisted too long for their mutual happiness and peace of mind."

Mr. Smith readily acceded to this proposal, and on the day appointed introduced the two brothers to each other, who were soon seemingly reconciled upon the most friendly and cordial terms. Mr. Smith seeing this, left them for near an hour, in

order to afford them a better opportunity of unbosoming themselves with more freedom upon family affairs, and on his return was happy to see, not only every shade of difference done away, but an exchange of the most warm and fraternal affection. In this manner they parted about six o'clock in the evening, the Captain taking his leave first, but promising to renew his visits whilst Sir John remained in that neighbourhood.

But, alas! all this on the part of Captain Goodere was only the prelude to one of the basest and most savage transactions that modern times can instance. Scarcely had Sir John left Mr. Smith's house, when passing by College Green coffee-house, a body of ruffians, (some belonging to the Ruby man of war, and others to

the Vernon privateer,) with Captain Goodere at their head, suddenly seized upon him, and hurried him away with the utmost violence to a boat attending in the river, and from thence on board the Ruby, the Captain assisting all this while, and covering his brother with a clock, in order to deaden the cries of murder, which he repeatedly vociferated during this unnatural assault.

When they had got him into the Purser's cabin, the Captain, by promises of reward and promotion, prevailed upon two of the ruffians (Matthew Mahony and Charles White) to strangle him. Poor Sir John begged hard for his life, "pleaded his near relationship, his age, his innocence, and his willingness to do every thing agreeable to his brother's inclinations," but all

in vain! The Captain told the crew "that he was a desperate madman, and must be made away with;" he accordingly cut the cord which tied his escritoir to the floor of the cabin, and passing it himself round his brother's neck, desired the two ruffians to do their duty, whilst he stood sentinel at the door, with a drawn sword in his hand, to prevent any body passing that way.

Owing to the awkwardness arising from their compunction and the struggles of Sir John, they were above half an hour in accomplishing this horrid murder. At last, when it was over, the Captain very deliberately walked into the cabin with a lighted candle in his hand, and after feeling and surveying his brother's dead body for some time, exclaimed, "Aye, this will do, his business is now done!"

The next day, the circumstance of a gentleman being hurried over College Green in a violent manner by some ruffians, and the cries of murder being repeatedly heard, induced Mr. Smith to make some further inquiry; when finding the description of the gentleman exactly answer to the person of Sir John Dinely Goodere, &c. he had strong suspicion of some foul play having been shown him by his brother; not, as he afterwards said, "that he could suppose any thing like murder in the case, but for some sinister purpose of forcing him into pecuniary arrangements." Under this suspicion, he applied to the Mayor of Bristol for a warrant to search the Ruby, which was accordingly granted, and there Sir John was found strangled in the Purser's cabin, and the Captain already se-

cured by the first Lieutenant and two of the men, who had overheard all the particular conferences relative to the murder.

His two associates, White and Mahony, were soon after taken; when the verdict of the coroner declaring them all guilty of *wilful murder*, they were tried at the ensuing assizes at Bristol on the 26th of March, 1741, before Henry Coombe, esq. mayor, and Sir Michael Foster, recorder, when being convicted on the fullest and clearest evidence, they soon after suffered the sentence of the law*.

Thus, Mrs. Foote deriving under the will of her brother Sir John Dinely Goodere, became heiress to his estates.

John Foote had two sons by this

* For the particulars of this extraordinary trial, see the Appendix.

lady, Samuel and Edward. The first, the subject of these memoirs, was designed for the bar; the second for the church, which he afterwards entered into, but being naturally a very weak man, and without preferment, he dribbled away his patrimonial fortune, and was latterly in a great degree supported by the liberality of his brother.

The father died soon after the establishment of his children in the world, but the mother lived to the extreme age of *eighty-four*, through various fortunes. We had the pleasure of dining with her in company with a grand daughter of her's, at a barrister's chambers in Gray's Inn, when she was at the advanced age of *seventy-nine;* and though she had full sixty steps to ascend before she reached the drawing room, which

looked into the gardens, she did it without the help of a cane, or any other support, and with all the activity of a woman of forty.

Her manners and conversation were of the same cast; witty, humorous, and convivial; and though her remarks, occasionally, (considering her age and sex,) rather strayed "beyond the limits of becoming mirth," she, on the whole, delighted every body, and was confessedly the heroine of that day's party.

She was likewise in face and person the very model of her son Samuel—short, fat, and flabby, with an eye that eternally gave the signal for mirth and good humour: in short, she resembled him so much in all her movements, and so strongly identified his person and manners, *that by changing* habits, they might

be thought to have interchanged sexes.

And here, perhaps, it will be necessary to pause, in order to trace the source from which her son might probably have derived that abundant store of wit and humour he so early displayed, and circulated through the whole course of his life.

"Genius (says Dr. Johnson) is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction:" and we are told by the same author, "that the late Sir Joshua Reynolds had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson's treatise on painting." This definition, no doubt, will generally apply to the cultivation of arts and sciences; but *true wit* is neither altogether inductive, nor mechanical: a man may read works

of humour till he is blind, and spend his last guinea in the company of wits, without becoming one himself: deny him the original stamina, education, like armour upon the weak, will but incumber him, and habit render him petulant and troublesome, destined to settle in, perhaps, a miserable punster, or the uniform narrator of a twentieth told tale.

Where then shall we look for this first impulse in Foote? he could not have it from his father, who, by every account, was a plain, regular country gentleman; nor from his brother, who was so *imbecile* both in mind and body, that he had scarcely power to provide for himself in any department of life. May we not, then, with some propriety ascribe this extraordinary natural talent as hereditary from his mother? who not

only transmitted to him her face and person, but likewise the model of her mind, which, polished by a higher education, and a selection of congenial company, ripened into all that richness and luxuriance of fancy, which was so long the delight and admiration of the gay, the fashionable, and literary world.

Some of our best poets have given such early proofs of their talent for versification, that they have been said "to lisp in numbers." Foote had this early talent for wit and humour, as long before he left his family roof he showed it in a variety of instances; insomuch, that we have often heard him say, "he was the *father* of many (that were then called good things) when he was but a *mere child.*"

His first education was at one of

the three principal grammar schools long since founded in the city of Worcester, and which have always borne a considerable reputation for learning in all its branches, as well as a general attention to the morals of the pupils. The school to which he was sent was, at that time, under the care of Dr. Miles, a particular friend of his father's, and a man of great eminence in the discharge of his duties. Many stories are told of the freaks of young Foote while he resided at this school; such as his being the leader and contriver of a celebrated barring-out (a species of occasional rebellion common among the youths of those days), blacking his master's face while asleep, forming artificial earthquakes under his master's chair, &c.; all of which, however, did not impede h

in learning, as he went through his school exercises at least with as much credit as some of the first scholars in his class.

Though these frolics marked the general eccentricity of his mind, the following circumstance first unfolded those peculiar talents for mimicry, which afterwards so much distinguished him among all classes of society.

Being at his father's house during the Christmas recess, a man in the parish had been charged with a bastard child; and this business being to be heard the next day before the bench of justices, the family were conversing about it after dinner, and making various observations. Samuel, then a boy between eleven and twelve years of age, was silent for some time; at last he

drily observed, " Well, I foresee how this business will end, as well as what the justices will say upon it."—" Aye," said his father (rather surprised at the boy's observation), " well, Sam, let us hear it." Upon this the young mimic, dressing up his face in a strong caricature likeness of justice D——, thus proceeded:

" ' Hem! hem! here's a fine job of work broke out indeed! a *feller* begetting bastards under our very noses, (and let me tell you, good people, a common labouring rascal too,) when our taxes are so great, and our poor rates so high; why 'tis an abomination; we shall not have an honest servant maid in the neighbourhood, and the whole parish will swarm with bastards; therefore, I say, let him be fined for his pranks

very severely; and if the rascal has not money, (as indeed how should he have it?) or can't find security, (as indeed how should such a *feller* find security?) let him be clapp'd up in prison till he pays it.'

"Justice A— will be milder, and say, 'Well, well, brother, this is not a new case, bastards have been begotten before now, and bastards will be begotten to the end of the chapter; therefore, though the man has committed a crime—and indeed I must say a crime that holds out a very bad example to a neighbourhood like this—yet let us not ruin the poor fellow for this one fault: he may do better another time, and mend his life; therefore, as the man is poor, let him be obliged to provide for the child according to the best of his abilities, giving two honest neigh-

bours as security for the payment.' "

He mimicked these two justices with so much humour and discrimination of character, as "to set the table in a roar;" and, among the rest, his father, who demanded, why *he* was left out, as he also was one of the Quorum? Samuel for some time hesitated; but his father and the rest of the company earnestly requesting it, he began:—

"Why, upon my word, in respect to this here business, to be sure it is rather an awkward affair; and to be sure it ought not to be; that is to say, the justices of the peace should not suffer such things to be done with impunity:—however, on the whole, I am rather of my brother A——'s opinion; which is, that the man should pay according to his circum-

stances, and be admonished—I say *admonished**—not to commit so flagrant an offence for the future."

After passing through his school education with the character of an arch, clever lad, he went out, in course of election, for Worcester college.

This college was anciently called Gloucester hall, from the benedictine monks of Gloucester, who educated their pupils here in academical learning. On the suppression of religious houses, Henry VIIIth granted it to Dr. Robert King, the first bishop of Oxford, as a palace for him and his succes-

* A favourite word of his father's on the bench; which, with his plain matter-of-fact manner of pronouncing it, and twirling his thumbs at the same time, drew so correct a picture of the justice, as met the warmest approbation of the whole company; and even of his father, who, so far from being offended, rewarded him for his good humour and pleasantry.

sors, who remained in possession of it as long as the see was at Ouseney.

It was purchased afterwards by St. John's college, and called St. John Baptist's hall; a fellow of St. John's being principal of it; and so it remained until 1714, when Sir Thomas Cocks Winford, a second-cousin of Foote's, founded it anew, under the title of Worcester college, by a charter obtained from queen Anne in the last year of her reign, establishing here a provost, six fellows, and six scholars.

It was to this college that our hero was removed by election, and put under the care of Dr. Gower, the then provost. Gower was a man of considerable learning, but rather of a grave, pedantic turn of mind; and pe-

dantry was to Foote an irresistible bait for every kind of wit and humour: he sought for nothing but the ridiculous in every man's character; and having once ascertained this point, he filled the canvas by means of his own luxuriant imagination.

One of the first tricks he played upon the doctor, was the following:—The church belonging to the college fronted the side of a lane where cattle were sometimes turned out to graze during the night, and from the steeple hung the bell rope, very low in the middle of the outside porch. Foote saw in this an object likely to produce some fun, and immediately set about to accomplish his purpose. He accordingly one night slily tied a wisp of hay to the rope, as a bait for the cows

in their peregrination to the grazing ground. The scheme succeeded to his wish. One of the cows soon after smelling the hay as she passed by the church-door, instantly seized on it, and, by tugging at the rope, made the bell ring, to the astonishment of the sexton and the whole parish.

This happened several nights successively, and the incident gave rise to various reports,—such as not only that the church was haunted by evil spirits, but that several spectres were seen walking about the churchyard, in all those hideous and frightful shapes which fear, ignorance, and fancy, usually suggest on such occasions.

An event of this kind, however, was to be explored, for the honour of philosophy, as well as for the quiet

of the parish. Accordingly the doctor and the sexton agreed to sit up one night, and, on the first alarm, to run out and drag the culprit to condign punishment. Their plan being arranged, they waited with the utmost impatience for the appointed signal:—at last the bell began to sound its usual alarm, and they both sallied out in the dark, determined on making a discovery.

The sexton was the first in the attack. He seized the cow by the tail, and cried out "it was a gentleman commoner, as he had him by the tail of his gown;" while the doctor, who had caught the cow by the horns at the same time, immediately replied, "No, no, you blockhead, 'tis the postman, and here I have hold of the rascal by his

blowing-horn." Lights however were immediately brought, when the character of the real offender was discovered, and the laugh of the whole town was turned upon the doctor.

At another time, when Foote was enjoined to learn certain tasks in consequence of his idleness, he used to come forward with a large folio dictionary under his arm, and present himself before the doctor with great seeming gravity and submission. "Well, Sir, what do you want?"—"Sir, I am come to do away the imposition laid upon me."—"What do you mean by *imposition?* I would have you know, Sir, I impose upon nobody."—"I am sure then, Sir, if you did not *impose* this duty upon me, I should never have taken a natural fancy to it."

Here the doctor usually growled, and desired him to go on, which the other generally did with a degree of talent and perspicuity that often confounded his examiner. After this the doctor would read his pupil a lecture on idleness, and on the great danger of following the ebullitions of fancy in preference to the dictates of sober judgment; describing also the figure he might make in the world, if he took the proper course; and, on the contrary, the contempt and misery which must follow a life of inattention and dissipation.

The doctor, in delivering this lecture to his pupil, did it in a sour, dogmatical, pedantic manner, accompanied with a number of hard words and quaint phrases; the other, being prepared for these, immediately

interrupted him, and after begging pardon, with great formality, would take his dictionary from under his arm, and pretending to find the meaning of the word, would say, "Very well, Sir; now please to go on."

In this manner Foote passed the time usually spent at the university; not that he was altogether idle in respect to study, for he had an ambition that counteracted his love of pleasure, and frequently induced him to turn his attention to his books: and thus besides rendering himself a very competent Greek and Latin scholar, he pursued a course of *belles lettres* reading, very rare in young men of his description.

From college, he entered himself

of the Temple, and took chambers accordingly, with a view (at least as his friends hoped) of becoming a member of that society; but the study of the law was little suited to the eccentricities of such a character! Yet I by no means agree in the common remark, "that the law is of so dry and unfruitful a nature, as to chill the livelier sallies of the mind, and depress all genius." On the contrary, I think with Cicero, "that it is a species of knowledge of the most extensive import; a business of science, ingenuity, diligence, and reflection;" in which argument may frequently be supported by wit, and wit may occasionally lend its perspicuity to argument. But Foote was so far from combin-

ing the talents of wit and judgment to advantage in a sober profession like the law, that his mind only led him to ridicule it; and had it been his lot to be unavoidably chained down to this profession, he would, in all probability, like Momus among the Gods, have busied himself only in keeping up the ball of wit, good humour, and buffoonery.

During his continuance in the Temple, he was seen there *pro forma*, situated in handsome chambers, surrounded by a well furnished library, and eating his way (*vid* commons) to the profession of the law. He is remembered by a few now living, in that situation; and they report him to have been one of the greatest beaux (even in those days of

general dress), as well as one of the most distinguished wits, who frequented the Grecian and the Bedford.

These coffee-houses, at that period (now full sixty years ago), were frequented principally by dramatic wits and young Templars. The Grecian had held its charter for wit and taste ever since the beginning of the last century: here the Templars opened their morning rounds in their elegant *robes de chambre* and morocco slippers, and from this place many of the papers of Addison, in the Spectator, are dated.

The Bedford principally laid claim to dramatic criticism, when that science bore a much prouder name in the annals of literature than it does at present; here the wits generally

supped after the play, and passed judgment freely on the several authors, actors, and managers.

The stage at that time formed a general topic of conversation among all ranks of people. It had been just relieved from a long usurpation of mummery and frivolity, which for the most part occupied it from the relinquishment of the elder Cibber, to the commencement of Garrick; and during that period the old stock plays were so entirely abandoned by the managers, partly through ignorance, and partly through a too eager desire to recruit their exhausted fortunes, that a number of ladies of the first distinction entered into a subscription for exhibiting the plays of Shakspeare weekly, in order to recover the drooping spirit of the Drama,

and prevent the total extinction of our old dramatic writers.

In the infancy of this restoration Foote appeared; in the flush of youth, wit, and fortune. Dr. Barrowby, no mean judge in every thing which respected elegant knowledge, was present at his first exhibition at the Bedford, and he always spoke of him as a young man of most extraordinary talents.—"He came into the room," said he, "dressed out in a frock suit of green and silver lace, bag wig, sword, *bouquet*, and point ruffles, and immediately joined the critical circle of the upper end of the room. Nobody knew him. He, however, soon boldly entered into conversation; and by the brilliancy of his wit, the justness of his remarks, and the unembarrassed freedom of his

manners, attracted the general notice. The buz of the room went round, 'Who is he? whence comes he?' &c.; which nobody could answer; until a handsome carriage stopping at the door to take him to the assembly of a lady of fashion, they learned from the servants that his name was Foote, that he was a young gentleman of family and fortune, and a student of the Inner Temple."

He continued in the Temple but a very few years; and yet even this period was sufficient to exhaust a fortune, which, by all account, was very considerable, and which perhaps, with a genteel economy, might have given him the *otium cum dignitate* independent of any profession. But he was incapable of the ordinary restraints of life: he dashed into all

the prevailing dissipations of the time; and what the extravagance of dress, living, &c. had not done, the gaming table finally accomplished. He struggled with embarrassments for some time; but want, imperious want, is an austere monitor, and must at last be attended to by the most thoughtless spendthrift. He accordingly soon found himself at a stand; his creditors grew obstinate and impatient; his friends, as is usual in such cases, deserted him; and he found that something must necessarily be done, to provide the means of subsistence.

In this situation, it was very natural for him to think of the stage. *Acting* was a science which he already knew theoretically; and, conversing so much with players as he usually did, he was perhaps not a little

incited by their disengaged, *free* manner of living, to become a candidate for the profession—a desire which the following opportunity might have accelerated.

Macklin, in conjunction with Garrick and others, had, from the repeated ill management of Fleetwood, the manager, seceded from Drury-lane Theatre in the year 1743; and though Garrick afterwards made his peace with the manager, and returned to his duty, Macklin was left to shift for himself, which occasioned not only law suits, but a violent paper war, that took up much of the dramatic attention of that time. Macklin, however, was not a man to yield to despondency; he looked into the resources of his mind, and at last adopted a plan of employing himself, which, if it had met with suffi-

cient encouragement, would have contributed much to the improvement of the stage.

He collected a company of performers at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, all novices in the art, whom he undertook to instruct in the principles of the drama; of whom Mr. Hill (afterwards the celebrated Sir John Hill, who was likewise one of the performers) gives the following account, in a work published many years ago, *On Stage Recitation.*

"There was a time" says he, "when that extravagance which has been recommended for farce, had its place in tragedy, both in action and delivery; the gestures were forced, and beyond all that ever was in nature, and the recitation was a kind of singing. We are at present get-

ting more into nature in playing; and if the violence of gesture be not quite suppressed, we have nothing of the *recitative* of the old tragedy. It is to the honour of Mr. Macklin, that he began this great improvement.* There was a time when he was excluded the Theatres, and supported himself by a company, whom he taught to play; some of whom made no inconsiderable figure.

"It was his manner to check all the cant and cadence of tragedy: he would bid his pupil first speak the passage as he would in common life, if he had occasion to speak the same words; and then, giving them more force, but preserving the same accent,

* Though Macklin might have begun this improvement theoretically, and by private teaching, Garrick was the first (in the year 1741) who, by the justness of his own powerful example, dissolved the charms of the old school.

to deliver them on the stage. When the player was faulty in his stop or accents, he set him right; and with nothing more than this attention to what was natural, he produced out of the most ignorant persons, players that often surprised the audience *."

To join this theatrical muster roll, Macklin held out every encouragement to his young friend Foote, with whom he had been for some time acquainted at the Bedford, and other places in the outset of his fashionable career. Foote's necessities and inclinations induced him to become

* Among other instances of this, there was a man of the name of Yorke, who obtained, even to his own surprise, great applause in the little character of Montano, in Othello, which consists of scarcely a dozen lines; but these he spoke, from Macklin's instructions, with so much feeling and propriety, as induced one of the managers to engage him at a considerable salary. But in higher characters, and left to himself, he lost the reputation he had acquired.

a willing recruit; and he accordingly made his first *entré* at the Haymarket Theatre on the 6th of February, 1744, in the character of Othello; Iago by Mr. Macklin, and Lodovico by Mr. Hill.

How a man so exclusively comic as Foote, should think of a tragic part for his *dèbût*, and one where all the contending passions of tragedy are so powerfully delineated as in Othello, would be a matter of surprise, did we not consider, that the prevailing passion of most of our stage candidates points to the *lover* and the *hero*. These seem to be the general pursuits of most young minds; who, by a combination very natural to that period of life, wish to impress those characters (particularly on the female part of the audience) as belonging to *themselves*, independent

of the poet. This will account for his having so much mistaken inclination for genius; for though he might have found his powers calculated for the comic in private life, on the stage he had the ambition to show himself fitted for a higher sphere, and for assuming all the grandeur of the more elevated passions.

The trial, however, soon proved the contrary; for though the generality of the audience received him with every degree of indulgence, and many of the first distinction cheered him, from personal and family knowledge; his performance on the whole was found to be too imperfect for either public or private patronage. Macklin, who was the *Iago* in this play, said, on this occasion, "It was little better than

a total failure; that his singling out this part was much against his (Macklin's) judgment, as neither his figure, voice, nor manners, corresponded with the character; and in those mixed passages of *tenderness* and *rage*, the former was expressed so *whiningly*, and the latter in a tone so *sharp* and *inharmonious*, that the audience could scarcely refrain from laughing. Not," added Macklin, "but one could plainly discover the scholar about the young man, and that he perfectly knew what the author meant; but in the exhibition of the passions (where nature alone must be the tutor) he was miserably defective."

His fate in *Othello*, though it did not entirely cure him of his rage for tragedy, induced him to listen to the advice of his friends, and to

think of comedy as more suitable to his figure, talents, and natural feelings; but unfortunately the part in comedy which he adopted, seemed to be nearly as much out of his reach as Othello was in tragedy; it was in no less a character than that of *Lord Foppington*, in *The Relapse*, in which he made his second appearance on the 9th of April following.

As there is extant no *critique* on his performance of this character, it can be only spoken of from conjecture; and this will suggest that it must have been very far short of a real representation; as neither his figure nor his manners could represent, in dress, *hauteur*, and *nonchalance*, the high-bred and formal coxcomb of fashion: and what must have thrown him to a still greater

distance, was the public recollection of Cibber, who had been the reigning Lord Foppington for many years, and who was then living.

To participate in this disgrace, the manager himself played *Loveless*, (a gay, well-bred man of intrigue); which was a part so little fitted to Macklin's powers, that it must have been either uncommon vanity, or the general poverty of the company, that could force him into it. The representation of this comedy, however, is to be particularly noticed, as having first introduced to the stage the agreeable Miss Minors; who, in the little part of *Hoyden*, gave an early specimen of those abilities, which for so many years afterwards distinguished her in the comic line.

Disappointed in these two charac-

ters, his next attempt was in *Pierre*, in *Venice Preserved*; which turning out equally unsuccessful, at last induced him to abandon for ever all thoughts of tragedy, and enjoy himself in that element for which nature had so pre-eminently qualified him. In pursuance of this resolution, he engaged the next winter at Drury-lane Theatre; where, turning his thoughts entirely to comedy, he successively appeared in *Fondlewife*, *Sir Paul Pliant*, *Bayes*, &c. His merit in those characters will be spoken of more fully in considering him as an actor; at present it is sufficient to say, that he met with general applause, and that most of these characters were occasionally favourites with the public to the last.

But notwithstanding this recovered ground, he was not thoroughly

satisfied with himself; he felt within him powers fitted for much higher and independent pursuits: and after long meditation how he should employ them to the best advantage, at last struck out a path untrodden by any of his dramatic predecessors, by appearing in the double character of *author* and *performer;* and with this view opened the Haymarket Theatre in the spring of 1747, with a new piece of his own writing, called *The Diversions of the Morning.*

This consisted of the introduction of several characters in real life, then well known, whose manner of conversation and expression he very ludicrously hit-off in the diction of his drama, and further represented by an imitation not only

of their tones of voice, but even of their very persons. Among these characters there were a certain physician, who was much better known from the oddity and singularity of his appearance and conversation, than from any eminence in the practice of his profession; a celebrated occulist at that time in the height of vogue and popularity, &c.; and in the latter part of the piece, under the character of a theatrical director, he mimicked with great humour the several styles of most of the principal performers on the English stage.

An entertainment of this sort met at first with every degree of success that his most sanguine wishes could expect. The audience saw a species of performance quite novel

to the stage, brought forward and supported by a young man, independent of any other auxiliary than the fertility of his own pen, and his own powers of performance; while the author, feeling himself bold in this support, beheld his future fortunes opening before him.

He soon found, however, that he reckoned without his host; for, whether from the alarm excited in the theatres royal, or the resentment of most of the performers who smarted under the lash of his mimicry, the civil magistrates of Westminster were called upon to interfere; and, under the sanction of an act of parliament, for limiting a number of play-houses, opposed to Bayes's new raised troops a *posse* of constables, who, entering the theatre in magisterial array, dismissed the au-

dience, and left the laughing Aristophanes to consider of new ways and means for his support.

But he had now found out his *forte:* he likewise found that this *forte* had *personality* to favour it (a never-failing recommendation to him who caters for the public taste), therefore the original plan was not to be abandoned; he had nothing to do but to evade the act, and then every thing was likely to flow in the same prosperous channel as before. Governing himself by this determination, instead of advertising the Diversions of the Morning, as before, he now only issued the following card:—

"Mr. Foote's compliments to his friends and the public, and hopes for the honour of their *drinking tea* with him, at the Little Theatre in the

Hay-market, every morning at play house prices."

The whim and novelty of this card drew crowds of people of all descriptions to his theatre. Some expected a real dish of tea, with all its paraphernalia: others only supposed it a dialogue, like tea-table conversation: but all, except a very few in the secret, were ignorant of the real species of entertainment. While the audience were on the tiptoe of expectation, the manager came forward, and after making his respectful bow, acquainted them, "that as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, (whilst *tea* was *getting ready*,) proceed with his instructions before them."

This opened in a great degree the whole *manœuvre:* the joke succeed-

ed to a tittle; and he not only proceeded without further molestation that morning, but through a course of *forty* others that season, in thus *giving tea* to crowded and splendid audiences.

But though our author gained fame and emolument by this conceit, the players felt sore on the occasion. Like the frog in the fable, they with great propriety exclaimed, "Though this may be sport to you, it is death to us!" and therefore one and all reprobated the measure. Foote, however, was too high on the tide of prosperity, to listen to such complaints; he only laughingly replied, that "since that was the case, it was his duty to provide situations for such ladies and gentlemen so circumstanced; and that, instead of murdering blank verse, and assum-

ing the characters of kings and queens, lords and ladies, for which their abilities were totally unfit, he would place them where their talents could with more propriety be employed." He therefore produced a kind of *monologue drama*, wherein he assigned to the then principal performers different whimsical situations in the following manner:—

QUIN,

from his deep, sonorous voice, and weighty manner of speaking, he appointed a watchman;—thus:

"Past twelve o'clock, and a cloudy morning!"

DELANE

was supposed to have lost one eye; therefore he fixed him as a beggar man in St. Paul's churchyard, exclaiming:

"Would you bestow your charity on a poor blind man?"

RYAN,

who was remarkable for oddity and shrillness of voice, he dubbed a razor-grinder.

"Razors to grind! Scissars to grind! Pen-knives to grind!"

MRS. WOFFINGTON,

though elegant in her person, and very interesting in her face, had, at times, an unpleasant squeaking tone of voice. To this lady he assigned the office of an orange-woman to the theatre:—

"Have some oranges, ladies and gentlemen! or orange chips! Would you have some nonpareils? Have a bill of the play! glass of lemonade! Do have a bill of the play, ladies and gentlemen!"

WOODWARD

puzzled him, he said, to find out any trade he was fit for: he therefore spoke the following speech in his voice and manner from *Sir Fopling Fluster*:—"Wherever I go, there goes a gentleman; upon my life a gentleman; and when you have said *a gentleman*," (here dropping Woodward's voice and manner, and assuming his own), "why you have said *more than is true.*"

GARRICK

he was also very severe upon, who was apt to hesitate in his dying scenes; particularly in the fall of Lothario, as thus:

——"adorns my fall,
And che—che—che—cheers my heart in dy—dy—dy—dying."

In this manner he went through the season, laughing with the audience at the success of this whim; whilst the performers, whom he had mimicked, continued growling and meditating revenge.

In the ensuing spring he produced another piece of the same kind, which he called an Auction of Pictures; and which had as successful a run as the former. In this he introduced several new characters, all popular ones: particularly Sir Thomas de Veil, then the acting justice of peace for Westminster; Cock, the celebrated auctioneer; and the equally famous orator Henley. Neither of the above pieces, though they gave so much entertainment to the public, has been published in our author's works. The first however, *The Diver-*

*sions of the Morning*, as it was acted at Drury-lane Theatre in its improved state, will be found, with others *hitherto unpublished*, in the Appendix to this volume.

Being now determined to give a more dramatic regularity to his future pieces, his next production was a comedy in two acts, called *The Knights:* yet in this, though his plot and characters seem less immediately personal, it was apparent he kept some *real* personages in his view, and the town took upon themselves to assign the resemblance where it appeared most striking. His two principal characters, *Hartop*, in the disguise of *Sir Penurious Trifle*, and *Sir Gregory Gazette*, (the first having the strongest passion for entertaining his friends with stale insignificant stories, and the latter pos-

sessed of the most insatiable thirst for news without the least comprehension of politics,) are very strongly painted; particularly the first, which was performed by Foote himself, who, with his usual talent for mimicry, took off (as it was then said) the manners of a certain gentleman in the west of England with uncommon humour and perspicuity.

But what perhaps gave the highest *piquancy* to this comedy, was the conclusion of it; which consisted of a *feigned* concert of vocal music between *two cats*, in burlesque of the Italian opera. The principal performer in this novel species of entertainment, was a man well known at that time by the name of *Cat-Harris;* and of whom the following anecdote is told, which is too curious to be omitted in this place.

Harris, being engaged to Foote for this purpose, had attended several rehearsals, where his *mewing* gave infinite satisfaction to the manager and the performers. However, on the last rehearsal, Harris was missing; and as nobody knew where he lived, Shuter was prevailed upon to find him out, if possible. He inquired in vain for some time; at last he was informed that he lived in a certain court in the Minories, but at what house he could not exactly learn. This information was enough for a man *of congenial talents* like Shuter; for, the moment he entered the court, he set up a *cat-solo*, which instantly roused his brother musician in his garret, who answered him in the same tune. "Ho! ho! Are you there, my friend?" said Shuter:

"come, come away; the stage waits for us, and we cannot begin the opera without you."

This burlesque had a whimsical and attractive effect for some time; but the manager, foreseeing that it could only be temporary, added a different conclusion to it after the first run, which gave it a more dramatic appearance.

About the close of this season (1748) our author had a very considerable fortune left him by a relation of his mother, which enabled him once more to move in all that splendour of dissipation which was so congenial to his temper. He remained in London for some time, in order to identify this great change of fortune to his friends; and then moved off to the Continent, to add one

more English dupe to the intrigues and fripperies of the French nation *.

As he held no correspondence with any of his friends during his continuance abroad, the public knew nothing about him; however, their invention (as is usually the case in doubtful matters) was not idle: some said he had been killed in a duel; others, that he died of a fever, in consequence of his intemperance; whilst others (who perhaps wished their assertions to be true) positively reported that he was hanged. He disappointed all these tales by his arrival in London in the year 1752 (though he did not

* This being the *third* fortune left him, he set up a dashing carriage, &c.; and, as emblematical of the event, chose the following motto:

*Iterum, iterum, iterumque.*

make his public appearance till the year afterwards), bringing with him a comedy of two acts, called *Taste*, which was acted at Drury-lane Theatre that year, and ushered in by the following prologue:—

## PROLOGUE TO TASTE,

*Written and Spoken, in the Character of an Auctioneer, by Mr.* GARRICK.

Before this court, I, Peter Puff, appear,
A Briton born, and bred an Auctioneer;
Who, for myself, and eke an hundred others,
(My useful, honest, learned bawling brothers,)
With much humility and fear implore ye,
To lay our present desperate case before ye.
'Tis said, this night a certain wag intends
To laugh at us, our calling, and our friends.
If lords and ladies, and such dainty folks,
Are cur'd of Auction-hunting by his jokes;
Should this odd doctrine spread throughout the land,
"*Before you buy, be sure to understand;*"

Oh! think on us! what various ills will flow,
When great ones only purchase *what they know!*
Why laugh at taste? it is an harmless fashion,
And quite subdues each detrimental passion;
The fair-ones' hearts will ne'er incline to man,
Whilst thus they rage for china and japan.
The *Virtuoso* too, and *Connoisseur*,
Are ever decent, delicate, and pure;
The smallest hair their loosest thoughts might hold;
Just warm when single, and when married cold:
Their blood at sight of beauty gently flows;
Their Venus must be old, and want a nose;
No amorous passion with deep knowledge thrives,
'Tis the complaint indeed of all our wives.
'Tis said *virtu* to such a height is grown,
All Artists are encourag'd but our own.
Be not deceiv'd!—I here declare on oath,
I never yet sold goods of *foreign* growth;
Ne'er sent commissions out to Greece, or Rome,—
*My best antiquities are made at home.*
I've Romans, Greeks, Italians, near at hand,
Free Britons all, and living in the Strand;

I ne'er for trinkets rack my pericranium,
*They* furnish out my room from Herculaneum.
But hush!———
Should it be known, that English are employed,
Our manufacture is at once destroyed:
No matter what our Countrymen deserve;
They'll thrive as ancients, but as moderns starve.
If we should fall, to you it will be owing,
Farewell to arts! They're going! going! going!
The fatal hammer's in your hand, O Town!
Then set us up, and knock the poet down.

The general intention of this comedy (the profits of which were given by the author to Worsdale the painter, who acted the part of *Lady Pentweazle* with considerable applause), was to ridicule the numerous impositions that persons of fashion and fortune, with their still more ridiculous followers, daily suffer from the tricks and confederacies of painters, picture-dealers, auc-

tioneers, &c. as well as to show the absurdity of giving immense prices for a parcel of maimed busts, effaced pictures, and inexplicable coins, merely because they have the name and appearance of antiquity; while the more perfect, and really valuable performances of the most capital artists of our own age and country (if known to be such), are totally neglected or despised.

All this the author set forth in a very just, spirited, and humourous light: but whether it was that the generality of the audience did not thoroughly understand this refined satire, or that the pretended *virtuosi* were too much attached to their own infatuations, the piece, though it met with some approbation for a night or two, and was afterwards much approved of by succeeding audi-

ences, languished under a cold reception during that season.

He was more fortunate in his next production, which was a comedy in two acts called *The Englishman in Paris*, brought out at Covent-garden theatre, on the 24th of March 1753, for the benefit of Mr. Macklin, and styled, in the bills of that day, *An Answer to a French Farce called 'The Frenchman in London.'* To this he wrote an occasional prologue, (spoken by Mr. and Mrs. Macklin), addressed to the Pit, and an epilogue, which was spoken by Miss Macklin.

In this comedy he exposed the absurdity of sending our youths of fashion abroad, to *improve* themselves in only the vices and follies of neighbouring nations. Macklin acted the part of *Buck*; and that of *Lucinda* was expressly written for

Miss Macklin, in order to display her qualifications in music, singing, and dancing; in all of which she excelled, and gained universal applause.

In November of the same year Foote himself performed the character of *Buck* at Drury-lane theatre, being his first appearance since his late trip to the continent. Many idle stories having been circulated relative to him, while he was abroad, Garrick wrote on this occasion a prologue for him, in which he alludes to this circumstance in the following humorous manner:

Amongst the matters that occasion prate,
Ev'n I sometimes am matter for debate:
Whene'er my faults or follies are the question,
Each draws his wit out, and begins dissection.
*Sir Peter Primrose*, smirking o'er his tea,
Sinks, from himself and politics, to me.
"Paper! boy."—"Here, Sir, I am."—
"What news to day?"
"Foote, Sir, is advertised."—"What! run away?"

"No, Sir; he acts this week at Drury-lane."
"How's that?" (cries feeble *Grub*): "Foote come again?
I thought that fool had done his devil's dance:
Was he not hang'd some months ago in France?"
Upstarts *Mac-bone*, and thus the room harangued:
"'Tis true, his friends gave out that he was hang'd;
But, to be sure, 'twas all a hum; because
I've seen him since; and after that disgrace
No *Jontleman* would dare to show his face."

To him replied a sneering bonny Scot,
"You reason right, my friend; hang'd he was not;
But neither you nor I can tell *how soon*
he'll gang to pot."
Thus each, as fancy drives, his wit displays:
Such is the tax each son of folly pays.
On this my scheme they many names bestow:
"'Tis fame:"—"'Tis pride:"—nay worse,
"The pocket's low."
I own I've pride, ambition, vanity;
And, what's more strange than these, perhaps you'll see
(*Though* not so great a portion of it) *Modesty*.

**For you I'll curb each self-sufficient thought,**
**And kiss the rod whene'er you point a fault.**
**Many my passions are; though one my view:**
**They all concentre in the pleasing you.—**

Towards the close of this year, 1753, Macklin, among other projects, formed a resolution to leave the stage for ever; and for this purpose, on the 20th of December, took a formal leave of the audience, in a prologue written for him by Garrick. The plan of life which he was to adopt, and which he carried into execution, was, to build a tavern in the Piazza, Covent-garden, (which is now known by the name of the Piazza Coffee-house), where, besides a daily ordinary on a new plan, he was to give, occasionally, evening lectures upon oratory, &c., somewhat in the manner of the famous orator Henley, and of the disputants at the society of the Robin Hood.

The particulars of this strange medley having been already given to the public in various shapes, I shall not repeat them here; except to state, that it called out the talents of Foote, who constantly attended the lectures, and who equally perplexed the orator and delighted the audience by his repeated sallies of wit and humour.

In this respect, at least, the plan proved entertaining to the audience, many of whom resorted to the rooms as much to hear the effusions of Foote, as those of the lecturer. Not satisfied with this triumph, Foote thought his subject fit for a more exalted exhibition, and accordingly brought out Macklin on the Haymarket boards, in the character of an *Inquisitor*, contending with the celebrated Dr. *Rock* and *Tiddy-dol* for the dignity of the in-

quisitorial functions and the palm of victory; which, after a long contention, being allowed to Macklin, the entertainment was concluded by a St. Giles's ovation, in imitation of that then exhibiting at Covent-garden in the tragedy of *Coriolanus*.

In return for this stroke, Macklin retorted upon Foote with equal virulence, but less humour. He brought a ridiculous charge against him of robbing his friend of a portmanteau; and in doing this, was by no means sparing of the most coarse and opprobrious terms.

This contest (in which there seemed to be little besides personal abuse) soon disgusted the public; and both the combatants found at the conclusion, that they had bespattered each other without any emolument, or credit to themselves. The Haymarket theatre, after a few

nights, found *The Inquisition* very poorly attended; and on the 10th of January, 1755, Macklin's exhibition closed for ever; an event which was followed by his appearing in the Gazette on the 25th of the same month as a bankrupt, in the character of a vintner, coffee-man, and chapman.

Macklin, soon afterwards, returned to the stage, on which he continued for near half a century longer;—and Foote, to the more creditable exertions of his talents as a dramatic writer.

About this period Mr. Murphy began to appear upon the town as a leading critic and dramatic author. From the similarity of their pursuits, and in some respects the congeniality of their talents, he had contracted a close intimacy with Foote; and finding *The Englishman in Paris* succeed so well, he, in

imitation of Sir John Vanbrugh, (who complimented Cibber's *Love's last Shift*, by writing a sequel to it, called *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*,) paid the same compliment to Foote, by writing a sequel to his piece, called *The Englishman returned from Paris.*

This he had the frankness to communicate to his *friend* in the summer of 1755, with a developement of his whole plan, plot, characters, &c.; which the other so much approved of, that he *secretly* intended *to make it his own;* and accordingly setting to work upon Murphy's materials, finished a farce of two acts on the same plan, and with the same title, so rapidly, that he brought it out at Covent-garden theatre early in February, 1756.

The surprise and chagrin which Mr. Murphy must have felt on this

occasion, may very well be imagined. To have his confidence betrayed by any common acquaintance in the character of a gentleman, must be disagreeable and vexatious; but to be treated by an intimate friend, a brother author, in this glaring and dishonest manner, hurt his feelings in a variety of respects.—Yet what could he do? Foote was a man to be only laughed *at* or *with* through life: it was his privilege; and somewhat in the old character of *court fool*, individuals found no degradation in submitting to it. Mr. Murphy therefore followed the wiser course, in taking no other public notice of the transaction, than by aiming the following stroke at him, when he brought out his own original *Englishman returned from Paris*, a few months afterwards.

On some doubts being made as

to the identity of Sir Charles Buck from Paris, Sir Charles replies, "O yes! I grant you there has been an *impostor* about town, who, with much easy familiarity and assurance, has stolen my writings, &c.; and not only thus treacherously robbed me, but impudently dared to assume my very name even to my face; but I am the true Sir Charles Buck, I can assure you."

This occasioned a warm applause: but the author got little more than this temporary praise for his labour; as Foote's piece had been running with success above two months before at Covent-garden, and thus had deprived this of nearly all its novelty and profits.

Of the merits of the Farce brought out by Foote it may be said, that it has higher pretensions than its predecessor *The English-*

*man in Paris;* for here John Bull becomes, from a mistaken idea of travelling, a mere frenchified coxcomb, has a detestation for every thing English, and rejects the very woman on this account, now possessed of every advantage, whom before he was rushing headlong into marriage with, destitute of any. It is likewise much more dramatic than the other, and has a greater variety of characters, particularly those of *Crab* and *M'Ruthen,* which are happily drawn. But after all, much of this praise may probably be ascribed to Mr. Murphy, from whom the piece was, in a great degree, purloined; and who might truly say, as Virgil did to his Roman plagiarist,—

"Hos ego versiculos feci; tulit alter honores. Sic vos non vobis," &c.

Though this must be the opinion of

every candid man upon the subject, Foote nevertheless triumphed in his *dexterity;* and by sharing, as author and actor, in the nights when this farce was performed, he derived very considerable solid advantages.

By way of giving still greater variety to the town, he, on his benefit night, this year (which happened on the 8th of March), advertised himself for the part of *Polonius* in *Hamlet*; but afterwards recollecting, as he said himself, "that he had no great talents for a *statesman*," he very disinterestedly resigned his place at court, and gave up the lucrative office of lord chamberlain to Mr. Arthur.

The next season (1757), our hero, with that versatility of character which ever distinguished him, veered to Drury-lane, and brought out

at that theatre a new comedy in two acts, called *The Author*. This piece has little or no plot to recommend it; it principally turns on the distresses incident to an author who writes for his daily bread, and on the caricature of a gentleman of family and fortune, who appears ridiculously ambitious of being thought the patron of arts and sciences. As the freedom which Foote took with this gentleman's private character forms so leading a feature in his own, I shall make no apology for detailing the following particulars, which at that time made a considerable noise in the theatrical world.

Mr. Aprice (for that was the real name of the gentleman in question) was a man of fortune and education, and allied to many families of distinction. Foote was among the number of his most

intimate acquaintances; an incident which, far from restraining the wantonness of his pen, only served, by furnishing a nearer view of his social and unguarded hours, to give the readiest means of finishing his picture with the greatest exactness.

There were, no doubt, many peculiarities about Aprice, which rendered him an easy subject for the pencil of a caricaturist. "In his person he approached to the larger size; but seemed to be more encumbered by his deportment than his corpulence, which, with a broad unbecoming stare, and awkward style, made him appear to look and walk absurdity. His voice was loud, his manner of speaking boisterous; his words were uttered rapidly and indistinctly, while his head was constantly undulating to his left shoul-

der, as if to recal what he had inadvertently spoken *."

Such a striking original could not well be overlooked. Our caricaturist, therefore, had taken him so exactly at all points, that from his first entrance on the stage to his *exit*, he was hailed with the loudest bursts of applause from all parts of the house. The whim of it was increased by seeing Aprice as one of the audience; who, far from resenting, or perhaps at first knowing it, joined in the general laugh at his own portrait.

This farce was performed for a great number of nights to crowded audiences before Mr. Aprice felt the severity of the satire: but at last the joke became so serious, that whenever he went to any public place, the park, play-house, assembly, coffee-

* *Davis's* Life of Garrick, vol. i. page 193.

house, &c. the name of *Cadwallader* (the hero of the farce) was applied to him, and sounded loud enough to be distinctly heard by every body around; so that even his best friends avoided his approach, for fear of proving witnesses to his being made a public laughing stock.

The veil being now removed from his eyes, he was determined, if possible, to get the piece suppressed; and applied to Foote for that purpose; but he, having the laugh and the profit so much on his side, thought proper to disregard these overtures. The gentleman then applied to Mr. Garrick, who at first evaded him; but he remonstrated with so much firmness, that Garrick at last advised him to apply to the Lord Chamberlain for redress. This he immediately did, and obtained from the humanity and politeness of the Duke

of Devonshire, that justice which the original aggressor should have been the first to afford him.

In the spring of the following year Foote visited Ireland, in company with Tate Wilkinson, who afterwards turned out to be so able a coadjutor to him in the line of mimickry. Wilkinson was supposed to be a pupil of his; and, indeed, Foote's own account of him in the character of *Shift*, seems to warrant that opinion: but the following fact, which is stated from the Memoirs of Wilkinson's Life, proves the contrary.

"The last week of Mr. Foote's playing at Drury-lane (previously to his intended trip to Ireland,) he was accidentally with Garrick, Holland, and others, in the green-room. The conversation turned upon imitation; when Garrick said, 'Egad,

Foote, there's a young fellow engaged with me, who I think is superior to either of us at *mimicry*. I used to think myself well at it, but I actually give him the preference. 'Tis true, he has tried to resemble me, but that won't do; though Mrs. Garrick says, she is sure he will have me.'—'Indeed!' says Foote, 'I should be glad to see him.'—The result was, Holland was dispatched for Wilkinson; who gave them such a 'spice of his quality' in the mimicking of Barry, Sparks, Woffington, Ridout, Sheridan, and others, that Foote engaged him, with Garrick's permission, to go with him to Ireland, promising at the same time to get him an establishment with Sheridan for the remainder of the season."

While our hero was in Ireland, he *produced*, with great applause, most

of the pieces which he had exhibited in London; particularly *The Diversions of the Morning*, which he enlarged by the introduction of Wilkinson as first pupil to Mr. Puzzle the instructor. In this capacity Wilkinson was received with so much *éclat*, that one night, elated with the applauses which he received from the audience, he ventured on his master, whom he hit off so successfully, that many voices from the pit cried out, "Foote outdone!" Foote was, during this time, in one of the upper boxes, seemingly enjoying the applause of the house, but inwardly feeling all the irritation of offended genius. When the play was over, however, he complimented Wilkinson on his general success; saying, he was very welcome to make free with him, as the *mimic mimicked* was certainly fair

game; but this, in the whisper of friendship, he would tell him, "that he thought *his part* was by far the worst imitation of the whole; indeed so bad, that he was afraid it would damn the reputation of the rest."

During Foote's stay in Dublin, he was received not only as a very eminent dramatic writer, but as a man of wit and pleasantry; and as such he was noticed by the Lord Lieutenant and the principal nobility and gentry of the capital, at whose tables he was a constant guest. He always respected the people of Ireland, and spoke of their good humour and hospitality with a kind of congenial delight. His observation likewise led him to examine particularly the characters of the middling and common classes of people in that country, to whom he often

paid this tribute of applause; "that they possessed more native wit and humour than any people of that description whom he had ever met with."

The Dublin stage was, at that time, by no means in the reformed state of the London theatres, and he suggested many alterations for the better; for though the elder Sheridan was in general a good manager, and had many years prior to this period cleansed the *Augean stable* both before and behind the curtain, other irregularities insensibly grew up, arising partly from the natural disposition of the people, and partly from the vanity of the manager. One in particular was, that when the audience were remarkably pleased with any individual passage, they continued applauding (no matter at

what state of the play) till the curtain fell, without suffering the whole to be regularly finished.

The absurdity of this custom Foote saw, and felt; he likewise saw that this was a compliment paid almost exclusively to the manager, who accordingly winked at it, through vanity; and therefore, one morning at rehearsal, he attempted to cure him of it by the following proposal: "My dear Sheridan," said he, "I have a thought just struck me, which I imagine would relieve you of a great deal of labour and trouble."—"In what manner?" cried Sheridan eagerly; "do inform me, and I shall be much obliged to you."—"Why, instead of *Richard the Third*, can't you play *King Henry* in the same tragedy?"—"Heavens! Mr. Foote, why should I relinquish *Richard*, when you have been often a witness of my

getting such universal applause in the part?"—"For that very reason, my dear friend," said Foote; "for if you'll but perform *Henry* instead of *Richard*, the play you know, from the applause you'll get in dying, will finish in the first act, and then we can all go home in good time to supper."—Sheridan affected to laugh at this; but the nuisance was too flattering to his pride to be suppressed, and so it continued, I believe, to the close of his management.

Upon the defection of Woodward in 1758, (who had become joint-manager of Crow-street theatre with Barry), Garrick engaged Foote and Wilkinson, in order to fill up the void which the absence of these great performers, and others who had joined them, occasioned.

*The* event justified Garrick's precau-

tion; as *The Diversions of the Morning* (which now became a *misnomer*, from being performed at *night*,) produced repeated full houses. The *imitations* by Wilkinson were at that time new to a London audience; and as he had closely copied most of the principal performers of Covent-garden theatre, the audience could readily apply the characters.

At the rehearsal of these imitations on the second morning, nothing was talked of in the green-room but the feelings and resentments of the other house; and particularly of Sparks, who had felt the mimickry so poignantly, that he had taken to his bed, and was dangerously ill. He applied to Garrick for redress; who, in his often convenient, though seemingly embarrassed manner, replied; "Why, hey now, Sparks! to be sure this

Wilkinson is a strange kind of fellow; but what can a man do with him? They say he takes me off, and Barry, and Foote; and therefore, my dear fellow! if you are taken off, you see you are brought into very good company."—"That may be so," said Sparks, with becoming sense and feeling; "but let me remind you, Sir, that many a man has been ruined by keeping too good company."

Garrick seemingly felt the force of this remark, and suppressed the Imitations for some time: but the audience being encouraged to call for them, they were soon revived with still greater attractions. However, as these imitations implicated most of the principal people of both houses, managers as well as actors, the laugh grew harmless; and, in the end, passed off unnoticed and unrevenged.

*Notwithstanding* the emoluments

which our hero received in his double capacity of performer and sharer in the receipts of the house (which were very considerable), his economy never kept pace with his revenue. He had no idea of any settled arrangement of expense beyond that of a *pay* and a *receiving pocket*. He generally kept a town and a country house, a chariot, horses, servants, &c. with a table mostly occupied by persons of the first distinction for rank and wit; and while his jokes were applauded, and his hospitality done justice to, *to-morrow* was always left to shift for itself, though that *morrow* often showed an empty purse, which only gave the alarm for fresh resources.

It was in this manner that, early in the February of this year (1759), finding himself under the necessity of raising the ways and means for the

remainder of the season, he thought of a trip to Scotland.

The Edinburgh theatre was at this time, in respect to a London emigration, quite a new object. No performer of any consequence would undertake a journey of four hundred miles, to a place where the manager was disabled, by the size of his house and his audience, to hold out any sufficient temptation, and where the highest benefit receipts did not exceed sixty pounds. However, something was to be done. England and Ireland had been already tried to advantage: Scotland remained untouched. He therefore wrote to a Mr. Callender, then the Edinburgh manager, offering his services, and at the same time asking his opinion of the probable success. The manager more than met him half way: *he* had already heard of Foote's

fame; and the novelty of such a performer opening the prospect of a plentiful harvest, he gave him every encouragement to try the experiment.

"Well," said Foote to Wilkinson, on receiving the letter to that purpose, "this Scotch expedition must be risked: but where are the ways and means? I must solicit Garrick, I believe; and yet it vexes me to the heart to let him assume such a superiority over me even in money matters: but necessity has no law." Garrick accordingly was applied to, next day, for the loan of a hundred pounds, which he readily granted, but (as Wilkinson reports,) in his usual manner of conferring favours: "he would endeavour to see Pritchard, the treasurer, about noon; and *then* he would speak to him about it; and *then* he (Foote) might draw on him

in the evening for the sum, leaving a note of acknowledgment for the same."

Though his necessities obliged him to accept this kind of loan, our hero felt all the humiliation of appearing before a play-house treasurer as receiving a boon from the manager. "I cannot ask any gentleman to transact this business," said he, "as I must then betray my poverty; nor can I send my servant, as it would lessen the importance of his master. Do, Wilkinson, oblige me; you are a common friend of both; your interference will tell no secrets; you know already that I am poor, and you equally know that he is mean and avaricious."

Wilkinson immediately complied with this request, and brought him the money in the evening; which so *dissipated* Foote's chagrin, that he

not only feasted upon Garrick's cash, but on his character also, by placing him in a thousand points of ridicule. Among other topics, he brought forward his *poetry;* parts of which he repeated, commenting on them in his usual vein of satire, and concluding, "that poor David's verses were so wretchedly bad, that if he should himself die first, he dreaded the thoughts of his (Garrick's) composing his epitaph." *

His trip to Scotland turned out every way fortunate. He was well received not only by the nobility and gentry of that kingdom, but by the public in general; and he returned to town in the May following, with good health and spirits, and a full purse.

After enjoying repose during that summer in London and its vicinity,

* Wilkinson's Memoirs.

he wintered for the second time in Dublin; where his own pieces, and Macklin's *Love-a-la-Mode*, brought great receipts to Crow-street theatre. It was here, on the 28th of January 1760, after the tragedy of Barbarossa, that he first brought out his (afterwards so much celebrated) comedy of *The Minor;* then a mere skeleton of two acts, without the character of *Smirk* the auctioneer, the epilogue, and other incidental matters which now so much embellish it. Even in that state it was the hobby-horse of the author; who, wherever he went (and he kept the first company in Dublin), *anticipated* the plan and jokes of this comedy, to the great entertainment of every body who heard them.

The night of exhibition at length arrived, and the house was crowded *in* every corner with persons of all

descriptions, to enjoy this novel piece of fun and humour: but whether methodism was then too well established in Dublin to stand the test of ridicule, or the humour and characters were too local to be relished, the comedy, after the scene of *Shift* and *Sir Wm. Wealthy*, much disappointed the audience. A kind of lassitude arising from misconception first took place; but when Woodward, who played *Mrs. Cole*, complained of the rheumatism in her hip, his *manner* was thought so indecorous by the boxes, as to create disgust. The rest of the audience followed the hint, and the comedy nearly received its final damnation. It was afterwards given out for a future day, with alterations; but these availed little: so that, after performing it for his benefit on the February following, he withdrew it for that season.

In this piece it is curious to observe how Foote indirectly condemned, by his own example, the propriety of bringing individuals before the bar of the public in a ridiculous and satirical point of view. It has been mentioned in the course of these memoirs, that when Garrick first introduced Wilkinson to Foote, the latter availed himself of the new performer's powers of mimicry, and in some respect took him under his more immediate protection. Wilkinson, sometimes in the ardour of profession, sometimes in his zeal to support a new piece, and sometimes as an offering to the rest of the players, (who smarted under the lash of this personal satire,) would occasionally take off Foote himself. Though for this he had always Foote's permission, or approbation, still it appears that he felt

sore in common with others, and even in a much greater degree; for while as mimic himself he triumphed, as the object of mimicry he felt a double disgrace.

Years however passed away without this disgrace being in the least resented; and hours and days of conviviality interposed, without the smallest symptoms of animosity. The two parties communicated together without reserve as friends, as men of business, and as familiar companions. But "*ce qui est diferré n'est point perdu;*" and Foote delayed his resentment only to make its object pay the more severely for his offence. Finding at last what he thought a proper *niche* for him in his *Minor*, he introduced him under the title of *Shift* in that comedy; a part which, for the piquancy of the writing, as well as for the exhibition,

of a leading feature in the character of our hero himself, I shall transcribe in this place.

*Scene between Sir William Wealthy and Shift.*

*Sir Wm.* Explain yourself.

*Shift.* You must know then, Sir, that fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who from a tailor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all; has thought fit to raise me to my present height from the humble employment of "*Light your honour,*" a link boy.

*Sir Wm.* A pleasant fellow this! who were your parents?

*Shift.* I was produced by a left handed marriage (in the language of the newspapers) between an illustrious lamplighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher, "Cat's meat and dog's meat! hearts, livers, lights, or a good sheep's heart!" I dare say you have heard my mother, Sir: but as to this happy pair I owe little beside my being, I shall therefore drop them where they dropped me, in the streets. My first knowledge of the world I [redacted] produced

many a great man, the avenues of the playhouse: there, Sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pickpockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashion from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters.

"Here, Sirrah, light me across the kennel!"—"I hope your honour will remember poor Jack."—"You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence; I'll pay you the next time I see you." But, lack-a-day, Sir, that *next time* I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

*Sir Wm.* Very well.

*Shift.* To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

*Sir Wm.* How did you gain admittance there?

*Shift.* My merit, Sir; that, like my link, threw a radiance round me. I moved the compassion of one of the performers, a whimsical man: he took me into his service. My master was remarkably happy in an art which, however disesteemed at present, is by Tully reckoned among the perfections of an orator, *mimicry*.

*Sir Wm.* Why you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!

*Shift.* A smattering. But as I was say-

ing, Sir, nothing came amiss to my master; bipeds or quadrupeds, rationals or animals, from the clamour of the bar to the cackle of the barn-door, all were objects of his imitation, and of my attention. In a word, Sir, for two whole years, under this learned professor I studied and starved, impoverished my body and pampered my mind; till, thinking myself pretty nearly equal to my master, I made one of his own bows, and set up for myself.

In the above character, which Foote performed himself, he was so far from concealing for whom he designed it, that he took off Wilkinson's voice and manner as nearly as he could; and, lest this should not be sufficient, he had it privately insinuated into the boxes, as well as publicly circulated in the newspapers, that *he* was the man. Wilkinson, in return, not feeling the genealogy of the character to be true, or likely to be believed, laughed, or affected *to laugh*, at all the other particulars;

and in a few years afterwards, (as will be seen in the course of these memoirs), both parties, hiding their animosities in their mutual interests, like old and staunch statesmen proved themselves to be incapable of either lasting love, or hatred.

His trip to Ireland, this year, was not by any means so favourable to him as his late excursion to Scotland. He had to divide his profits with Macklin, who brought out his *Love à-la-Mode* for the first time, as well as with the managers. His sheet-anchor too, *The Minor*, both in its second representation, and on his benefit night, failed; from which it happened that on his return to England his finances were so low, that he could not wait the opening of the winter theatres, but beat up for volunteers as well as he could, and commenced his summer campaign

at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, with the comedy of *The Minor* in its present improved state.

In retouching this comedy for the English stage, he saw the cause of its original failure, and immediately set about a corresponding alteration. He added the character of *Smirk* the auctioneer; and as he found personality to be always a good ingredient in the success of his pieces, he applied this character to Mr. Langford (successor to Cock the celebrated auctioneer), and in this capacity told, or invented many humorous anecdotes, which he illustrated with his usual whim and humour. He likewise added the epilogue, spoken by *Dr. Squintum* in the true cant of Whitfield, which gave great relief to the piece; so that with these additions, and the rest of the characters being better known

here than in Ireland, the comedy met with quite a different reception. It brought, that season, thirty-eight full houses, and continues to this day a favourite with the public.

The author's success on the stage produced almost equal success in public life; as, by his taking off, if not with a great degree of exactness, at least with irresistible ridicule, the enthusiastic manner of Whitfield, who was then at the head of the methodists, he seemed more effectually to open the eyes of the deluded followers of that enthusiast, than all the serious writings which had been published against them. Such is the power of ridicule, properly applied! We will not soberly take advice, because it implies a kind of superiority in the admonisher; but we cannot endure be-

ing laughed at, because it throws us into contempt.

The next campaign was remarkable for the reconciliation of our hero's difference with Mr. Murphy on the score of the foul play shown to that Gentleman, in purloining his comedy of *The Englishman returned from Paris.* Foote in his defence could only plead the *itch of plagiarism,* (sometimes so irresistible to writers), and his general character of eccentricity. This the offended party not only good naturedly excused, but entered into a joint partnership with him for the use of Drury-lane theatre during the summer, which they opened on the 3d of June 1761 with a new comedy written by Mr. Murphy, called *All in the Wrong.*

This comedy was one of the first

which established Mr. Murphy's rising reputation. His object was to describe the passion of jealousy; and here he has combined in one view, the various effects of it in domestic life, acting on different dispositions and different tempers, in the various characters of husband and wife, lover and mistress, in a very natural manner, without the least perplexity, or improper embarrassment. Some hints (as he himself confesses in his preface to the printed play) are taken from *Le Cocu Imaginaire* of Molière; but the plot and conduct of it are his own; and as such, continue to support his dramatic reputation to this day. Garrick thought so highly of it, as to compliment the author with the following entertaining epilogue:—

## EPILOGUE TO THE COMEDY OF "ALL IN THE WRONG."

*(Spoken by Mrs. Yates.)*

BLESS me! this summer-work is so fatiguing,
And then our plays so bustling, so intriguing,
Such miffing, sighing, scolding altogether,
These love affairs suit best in colder weather.
At this warm time these writers should not treat you
With too much love and passion, for they heat you.
Poets, like weavers, should, with taste and reason,
Adopt their various goods to every season.
For the hot months, the fanciful and slight;
For mind and body, something cool and light:
Authors themselves indeed neglect this rule;
Dress warm in summer, and in winter cool.
I told our author, that these five-act plays
Were rich brocades, unfit for sultry days:
Were you a cook, said I, would you prepare
Large hams and roasted sirloins for your fare?
The very smoke would pall a city-glutton;
A tragedy would make you all unbutton.
Both appetites now ask for daintier picking;
Farce, pantomime, cold lamb, or white-legg'd chicken.

At Ranelagh fine rolls and butter see!
Signior Tenducci, and the best green tea.
Italian singing is as light as feather;
Beard is too loud, too powerful, for this weather.
Vauxhall more solidly regales the palates;
Good wine, cantatas, cold boil'd beef, and ballads.
What shall we do, your different tastes to hit?
You (*Pit*) relish satire; you (*Boxes*) ragouts of wit;
Your taste (*first Gallery*) is humour, and high season'd joke;
You (*second Gallery*) call for hornpipes, and for "Hearts of Oak."
Oh, could I wish and have! a conjuring man
Once told my fortune, and he charm'd this fan:
Said, with a flirt I might enjoy my wish;
If so, I'll give you, Sir, an English dish.
If I like Harlequin have powers o'er men,
I'll flirt and wish, and wish and flirt again.
Come, then; a song! (*flirts, and music is heard:*) indeed! I see 'twill do,
Take heed, gallants; I'll play the deuce with you:
Whene'er I please will charm you to my sight,
And tear a fan with flirting every night.

*(Singers here enter, and sing the following Song.)*

" Ye critics above, and ye critics below,
Ye finer spun critics who keep the mid row,
O! tarry one moment, I'll sing you a song,
Shall prove that, like us, you are *all in the wrong.*
Sing tantarara, wrong all, &c.

" Ye poets, who mount on the fam'd winged steed,
Of prancing, and wincing, and kicking, take heed;
For when by these hornets, the critics, you're stung,
You're thrown in the dirt, and are *all in the wrong.*

" Ye actors who act what these writers have writ,
Pray stick to your poet, and spare your own wit:
For when with your own you unbridle your tongue,
I'll hold ten to one you are *all in the wrong.*

" Ye knaves who make news for the foolish to read,
Who print daily slanders the hungry to feed;

For a while you mislead them, the news hunting throng,
But the pillory proves you are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye grave politicians, so deep and so wise,
With your hums, and your shrugs, and your uplifted eyes;
The road that you travel is tedious and long,
But I pray you jog on, you are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye happy fond husbands, and fond happy wives,
Let never suspicion embitter your lives,
Let your prudence be stout, and your faith be as strong;
Who watch, or who catch, they are *all in the wrong*.

"Ye unmarried folks be not bought, nor be sold;
Let age avoid youth, and the young one the old;
For they'll soon get together, the young with the young,
And then, my wise old ones, you're *all in the wrong*.

"Ye soldiers and sailors who bravely have fought;
Who honour, and glory, and laurels have brought;
Let your foes but appear, you'll be at them ding dong,
And if they come near you they're *all in the wrong.*

"Ye judges of taste, to our labours be kind;
Our errors are many, pray wink, or be blind;
Still find your way hither, to glad us each night,
And our note we will change to, "we're *all in the right.*"
Sing tantarara, right all, &c."

The comedies of *The Citizen* and *The Old Maid,* as new pieces by the same author, followed next, and were both acted on the same night; a species of arrangement not to be generally recommended to authors, for reasons, or rather from prejudices, which the audience are apt to imbibe from the circumstances of the case:

for if both pieces are good, the audience, from the satiety produced by the first, cannot always keep their observation sufficiently alive to attend as they ought to do to the second, which therefore is likely to go off at best with indifference: but if the first piece should be condemned, or even disliked, its unprotected brother is presupposed to possess such a family-likeness as to merit the same fate.

This was not, however, exactly the case this night, as *The Old Maid* was rather favourably received: and though *The Citizen* did not meet with that applause which it afterwards received in its more improved state, it passed off pretty well, and had the credit of giving to the stage the afterwards celebrated Miss Elliot, who even then exhibited very

promising talents in all the various transitions of Maria.

The last of this summer's theatrical bill of fare, was a novel species of entertainment, founded on the plan of the Italian comedy called *The Wishes.* The hero of this piece is Harlequin, who is a lover and a fine Gentleman, and, according to his usual magic powers, can have every thing he wished for. But in the concluding scene, toying with his mistress on a couch, he wantonly, but unluckily, as a form of asseveration, "wishes he may be hanged;" which is no sooner said, than a gibbet arises from behind, which, drawing him up by the neck into the air, displays him dangling for some time, —a most unmeaning and disgusting spectacle. Here the audience could hold out no longer; and the piece

received a general disapprobation, which continued to the end. It was attempted a second night, to a very thin audience; and again on a third, for the author's benefit, to a much worse; when it ended as *wishes* generally do, in disappointment.

The author, who was then only known by the initials of T. B——, esq.,* sent this piece first to Garrick, who very properly rejected it as unfit for representation; which T. B—— esq. and his friends so much resented, that in a printed letter addressed to *himself* during the period of rehearsal, he thus animadverts on the conduct of the Drury-lane manager:

"But that any one who professes himself a man of taste, a lover of the *belles lettres*, a sovereign critic in dramatic performances, and one who

* Thomas Bentley, esq., son of the celebrated Dr. Bentley.

is himself a dabbler in the business, should so far forget himself, as to reject a work of so much wit, ingenuity, and inimitable writing, is most surprising."

The fact was, this farrago, from the beginning, was patronized by the late Lord Melcombe (of celebrated *Diary* memory); who, having been himself an author, and a proficient in the *belles lettres*, collected a party of right honourables and fashionables, to carry it through at any rate. His Lordship, however, on this occasion experienced a truth which, I trust, for the honour of the English drama, will never be contradicted:—that the nobler, and what are vulgarly called the higher classes of society, are insufficient in their number, their power, and co-operation of sentiment, to support any particular theatre, or piece, independent of

the public; and that it is only the great mass of the people that can finally establish the fate of any theatrical representation.

"The stage but echoes back the public voice."

Upon the whole, the fate of this summer adventure did not turn out to either the manager's or the general expectation. Whether it was that the audience at this theatre "did not choose to be spoken to but by their recorder"* (Garrick), or that they imagined it would take off the edge of winter amusements, so it happened, that the new generals, however they might have deserved, could not command success, and the campaign broke up with a silent determination on each side to act singly in future, which better answered the expectations of both in their different departments.

* Richard III.

Foote, on his part, hastened to make amends for his disappointment, by bringing out at Covent-garden theatre, so early as the month of January following, a comedy of three acts called *The Liar;* which, though not so well received as it has since been when cut down to two acts, brought both profit and reputation to the author.

The origin of this comedy will be found in *The Menteur* of Corneille, and in Sir Richard Steele's *Lying Lovers*; yet on these foundations Foote has contrived to raise so pleasing a superstructure, as to give the whole an air of novelty, which, by the laws of the drama, may fairly entitle the piece to be called his own, more particularly in the parts of *Young Wilding* and *Papillon.* The former of those characters Foote at first performed him-

self; but, from a clumsiness of person, and an exuberance of *grotesque*, failed in giving that easy, familiar, unabashed manner, which so happily distinguished the late John Palmer. It was, to the last, so much one of that actor's masterpieces, that the part seems to languish in the hands of his successors.

Following the same track with perseverance, our hero brought forward at the Haymarket theatre, in the following summer, a new piece of three acts, called *The Orators*;* the design of which was to expose the prevailing passion for oratory, the affair of the supposed Cock-lane ghost, and the debating society held at the Robin Hood.

In working up these materials, some real characters were to be sa-

* *The Orators* was first performed at noon, in ridicule of Sheridan, who was then giving his lectures with great success.

crificed; and as Dr. Johnson was said to be partly a believer in the Cock-lane ghost, he was looked upon as a proper object for the purpose. This secret was not so well kept as to prevent it from coming to the ears of Johnson, who made an immediate determination. He employed a friend to buy for him one of the stoutest oak cudgels that could be procured in town, and at the same time caused it to be made known both to the author and to the public, that he intended "to plant himself in the front of the stage-box on the first night of representation; and if any buffoon attempted to take him off, or treat him with any degree of personal ridicule, to spring forward on the stage, knock him down in the face of the audience, and then appeal to their common feelings and protection."

This rough declaration, and the well known character of Johnson for keeping his word, softened the rigour of our modern Aristophanes. He now thought it would be safer to relinquish the tyger for the lamb; and therefore took up, in exchange, the late George Faulkner, printer of the Dublin Journal, a man who had nothing to recommend him to the "fixed finger of Scorn" but a long life of industry, integrity, and hospitality, unoffending manners, and the misfortune of having lost a leg. It is true he had some trifling peculiarities of manner about him; but as these were attended with no vices, they ought to have been considered as pardonable weaknesses, demanding rather indulgence than reprobation. Yet such is the propensity of human nature for personal scandal, that the comedy was principally sup-

ported by this character; and crowded audiences were found repeatedly roaring at a few common-place stories, told in a ridiculous manner by a man hopping upon one leg.*

Our hero having now confined his exertions to the Haymarket theatre, produced in the following summer (1763) his celebrated comedy of *The Mayor of Garrat.* This piece, being intended to ridicule some particular characters in the militia, (which he has admirably done in the character of major Sturgeon,) was thought by several of his friends, previously to representation, a bold attempt. They remonstrated, and with a proper caution, "that however an audience may laugh at the peculiarities of an indi-

* Faulkner soon found ample revenge in the dispensation of Providence; as in less than four years afterwards Foote broke his leg, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and thus realized that part of the joke in his own person. For further particulars, see the Appendix.

vidual, the case was widely different when the ridicule in a great degree attached to themselves; that the militia was a body of citizens raised for the general defence of the nation, in which *all* were concerned, and which, it was to be apprehended, *all* might resent." But against this objection he had defended himself by only selecting such *outré* characters as militia-men themselves would join in ridiculing; and when a simple fishmonger was exhibited with the rank of a major, aping all the gallantries of a lover and a hero, the laugh was universal, and the comedy met with a success much superior to any of his former.

It should be here remarked, that the militia was in a very different state *then* from the condition of that body of forces, and of our volunteer corps, at *present*. They were then

as poorly drilled as they were indifferently and irregularly clothed; and had none of that *esprit de corps* which now so much assimilates them to the standing army, and which ranks them as a body of disciplined warriors. A little harmless ridicule therefore was allowable; particularly as the peace of 1763 was just then concluded, when, in the language of the major, the "*seddunt army tuggy**" acquired additional force.

The receipts produced by this comedy recruited our hero's finances so powerfully, that as his purse was generally the barometer to his spirits, he dashed into all kinds of higher extravagance. He made alterations both in his town and country house, enlarged his hospitalities, and laid out no less a sum than

* Cedant arma togæ.

1200*l.* in a magnificent service of plate. When he was reminded by some friends of these extravagancies, and particularly the last, he turned it off by saying, "he acted from a principle of economy; for as he knew he could never keep his *gold*, he very prudently laid out his money in *silver*, which would not only last longer, but in the end sell for nearly as much as it originally cost."

This season was likewise remarkable for terminating the dispute between Foote and Wilkinson, which had now continued for nearly five years; and from the provocation on the part of the former, was thought to be irreconcilable. The offender made the first advances, by sending a plenipotentiary to Norwich, where Wilkinson then was, offering him not only a *carte blanche* in his professional business, but his friend-

ship, house, and table. Wilkinson, not preferring any quarrel to his interest, and perhaps making the proper allowances for so peculiar and whimsical an antagonist, acceded to these proposals; and soon after joined him in town, where the truce continued with uninterrupted harmony to the death of Foote.

At the same time that he wrote to Wilkinson on this subject, our hero commissioned him to re-engage Weston; who, though then not generally known, was perceived by so good a judge as Foote, to be a very necessary man to support him in the particular line of his profession. Weston more than outran the most sanguine expectations of his patron; by not only playing the characters assigned him with infinite comic humour, but suggesting to the manager the ideas of writing for him

such others as Weston himself judged would best suit his abilities. Indeed he was upon the whole so *unique* an actor, that not to give him a particular place in any work touching upon the dramatic history of his time, would be doing injustice to his memory, as well as withholding an example which may be useful to mankind.

Thomas Weston was the son of Thomas Weston, head cook to King George the Second; which lucrative though menial employment, enabled him to give his son a good education, intending him for one of the liberal professions. With this view too he got his son early appointed a turnbroach, and soon afterwards an under clerk, in the king's kitchen, both which offices he performed by deputy. But the young man's genius pointed to other des-

tinations. The stage principally drew his attention; and hence he spent most of his time either at the theatres, or those public-houses in the neighbourhood which are frequented by the inferior heroes of the sock and buskin. He likewise became a member of one of the spouting clubs, which afforded a great range of amusement for stage-struck tyros at that time; and, in short, showed such a strong, evident partiality for this line, that his father, in order to put a sudden stop to his dramatic pursuits, entered him as a midshipman on board the Warspite man of war, then under the command of the late Sir John Bentley. But

**Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.**

Weston's genius triumphed over his father's determinations; as soon after he was stationed on board this ship *he* contrived to run away; and, be-

ing afraid to meet his father after this conduct, he entered into one of the strolling companies of the north, where he experienced all those strange vicissitudes of life which are so peculiarly incident to that situation.

About the year 1760 he was introduced to the Haymarket theatre, and there played the insignificant character of *Dick*, in *The Minor*; but even in this little part Foote saw his merit, and would have assigned him a proper situation in the company, had not his rambling disposition carried him off to Ireland, where his talents disclosing themselves more fully, he appeared to considerable advantage in the following characters: *Sharp*, in *The Lying Valet*; *Cymon*, in *Damon and Phillida*; the *Old Man*, in *Lethe*; *Daniel*, in *The Conscious Lovers*;

the *Clown*, in *Measure for Measure*; and many other characters in that line of performance.

From Ireland he strolled to Norwich; where, from his performing so trivial a part as the *Gentleman Usher*, in *The Rehearsal*, and others almost of equal insignificance, he seems, owing to some unaccountable circumstance, to have sunk in the public estimation. Fortune at last provided him his proper place, by transplanting him to the very hot-bed where his genius was most likely to thrive, under the care of the hero of these Memoirs.

His first principal appearance in the Haymarket was in the character of *Jerry Sneak* in the then new comedy of *The Mayor of Garrat*; and though the manager himself expressed infinite humour and discrimination in *Major Sturgeon*, the

subdued hen-pecked temper of *Jerry*, which was so visible in every feature and movement of Weston, divided the applause. In short, no man could have previously written up to such acting: it was one of those lucky aids which authors sometimes receive from actors, when the pen is obliged to yield to the superior powers of personation.

His fame being thus established, he appeared as a principal in all the manager's subsequent, as well as in most of his preceding pieces. Foote accurately studied the force of Weston's powers, and wrote for them; which the other repaid by so faithful a representation, as to produce both profit and reputation to the theatre.

From the Haymarket, he occasionally engaged at the winter theatres; and at Drury-lane obtained

such marked applause in *Abel Drugger*, in *The Alchymist*, that Garrick, who was himself almost matchless in the part, presented him with a bank note of 20*l.* at his benefit, accompanying it with this declaration, "that it was one of the finest pieces of acting he ever saw."

To speak correctly of Weston's uncommon powers, is rather difficult; as there was not in his time, nor has there been since, any comedian directly in his line. Nokes, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second, appears to be the only one who can with justice be ranged by the side of Weston; and to him, indeed, he seems to have left his mantle exclusively of all others.

In summing up his dramatic character, it may be said that he was an actor of a very different genius

from any that was seen long before or since his time; and yet this general excellence may be comprehended in one article; namely, a plain and palpable simplicity of nature. Shuter had a richness of colouring in his comic characters, that was pleasant but often wrong. Yates was generally chaste and correct, but he often carried this quality to a degree of coldness which threw a damp on the performance; but Weston united taste and humour in so eminent a degree, that when he raised his audience seemingly to the highest pitch of laughter, his features became the graver and steadier. Nature in him appeared to be simply performing her part, independent of any artificial aid, any audience, any applause, or any exterior exciting causes.

His *by-play* too was in the most

capital style of excellence. Who that remembers his surprise at breaking the phial in *Abel Drugger*; his returning for his shoes, after his medical examination in *Doctor Last*; or his hurrying up his wife's night clothes, on the well-known sound of "Jerry, Jerry, where are you, Jerry?" in *The Mayor of Garrat*; but must have a picture before them of such superior excellence, that they may well despair of ever "seeing its like again?"

With those peculiar powers which would have raised him, in the ordinary habits of prudence, to a respectable degree of independence, he had drawbacks in his passions, which levelled him to the ground. He was from his boyish days attached to low, pleasurable company; whence though mirth and a partial knowledge of nature may sometimes

be extracted, they are generally purchased at too great a price. It induces a habit of idleness and dissipation; and this last vice Weston acquired in so great a degree, that he was seldom sober. When his midnight companions were occasionally not to be found, the brandy-bottle was always near him; and to this he adhered so closely and unremittingly, that he soon destroyed his constitution, and died, on the 18th of January 1776, a miserable example of thoughtlessness and intoxication.

Having anticipated the regular progress of our hero's memoirs, with a view of giving a previous sketch of this celebrated character, we now return to the year 1764; when Foote, strengthened by the addition of Wilkinson and Weston, took the field in great force for the theatrical

campaign. His first piece in this summer was a comedy of three acts, called *The Patron;* which, though not the most successful of his dramas, sets his taste and knowledge in a very conspicuous light.

The object of this little entertainment is to ridicule those pretenders to wit and learning, who, assuming from their rank in life a character of patronage to which they are in no way entitled, encourage a set of artists as contemptible as themselves, for the sake of the incense offered at the shrine of their vanity. The character of *Rust* the antiquarian was played by Weston, with infinite drollery and chasteness of exhibition; and the making him fall in love with a beautiful young Lady because the tip of her ear resembled that of *Poppæa*, was a happy incident of ridicule. *Sir Peter Pep-*

*perpot*, a rich West India merchant, who is constantly giving an account of his barbecues and turtle-feasts; with a miserable poet, and a low Moorfields bookseller; form the whole group of this pleasing comedy.

*The Patron*, considered in a critical point of view, is certainly one of the best of Foote's pieces; but not being supported by any *personality* (though some guessed it to be directed at the character of the late Lord Melcombe), it was not received with those bursts of applause, so common to his higher-seasoned entertainments. It wanted that "drachm of base" which, however Foote may be censured for using it on the stage, the public were equally guilty in demanding; for by their setting so high a price on this contraband trade, they evidently encouraged the

manufacture. The author, however, thought so highly of this comedy, that in a dedication of it to the late Marquis of Stafford, he speaks of it as, "in his own estimation, the best that he had then written."

The comedy of *The Commissary* was the produce of the next season; which was a well-timed piece of ridicule on the commissaries and army contractors of what is commonly called "the seven years' war." Supposing these men in general to have sprung from nothing into the possession of great fortunes, great houses, and splendid establishments; the author shows, in a very ridiculous point of view, the means of their acquiring modern manners and accomplishments: as their receiving different lectures upon oratory, *dancing*, fencing, and riding the

great horse, all in one morning; and then complaining, in the language of a labouring mechanic, "What a difficult thing it was to become a gentleman!"

We have hitherto seen our hero, with very few exceptions, on the full tide of prosperity; the period now seemed to have approached, not only of diverting this stream from its usual course, but of drying up for ever its springs of wit and humour. He had been on a visit at Lord Mexborough's very early in the year 1766, accompanied by his Royal Highness the late Duke of York, Lord Delaval, Sir Francis Blake Delaval, and others; when some of the party, wishing to have a little fun with this prince himself of all fun and humour, purposely drew him into a conversation on horsemanship. Foote, who had

on most occasions a strong spice of vanity about him, boldly asserted, "that although he generally preferred the luxury of a post-chaise, he could ride as well as most men he ever knew." They urged him to a trial next morning at the chace; when, mounting him on a high-spirited mettlesome horse of the Duke of York's, he soon paid forfeit for his temerity; for he had scarcely set spurs to the sides of the animal, when he was thrown with such violence to the ground, as to fracture one of his legs in two places.

The joke now becoming more serious than they had expected, he was carried back to Lord Mexborough's house; and every possible attention was paid him by the Duke of York's surgeon, in order to save the limb, but in vain. He was obliged at last to submit to amputation; which was

performed so skilfully, that except the necessity of using a cork leg, he felt ever afterwards as little inconvenience as could possibly result from such an accident.

His friends thought that he would not be philosopher enough to bear up under such a misfortune; but they were deceived. Whether he rallied *en force* on this occasion; or whether supported by the presence of his royal patron, who showed him every kind of solicitude; he was ashamed to let his usual spirits flag. He was himself the first to advise amputation, when he found that the surgeons doubted on the necessity of the case; and both before and after it was performed, turned his jokes upon his own situation, as, as he observed, "he was then prevented from jesting with other people."

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While matters were preparing for

the operation, he requested that he might be dealt with indulgently, as it was the first time of his performance in the character of a *Patientee;* and after the first dressings were over, and his surgeons gave him hopes of a speedy recovery, he said "he had now no fears of corns, sores, or gibed heels; that he would not change his one good leg with Lord Spindle's two drum-sticks; and though to be sure he might find himself a little awkward at running, yet he would hop with any man in England."

In short, the blood which invigorated the lost limb, seemed to return in fuller tides to his heart, and give him an unusual flow of spirits; so that his friends were obliged to forbid him such a frequency of conversation, as well as prevent the access of visitors, till the attendance of the faculty was no longer necessary.

In a short time he recovered from this misfortune much better than most people had expected; as, with the help of a cork leg exactly fitted to the other, he was able to play most, if not all of his characters, as well as before. In some respects indeed his misfortune seemed to prove an actual advantage to him; as he used to avail himself of the trifling halt in his leg, to heighten the humour of the character.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York took care, likewise, to alleviate this accident by every instance of kindness in his power; and, among other good offices, he obtained for him in the July following, a royal patent to erect a theatre in the city and liberties of Westminster, with a privilege of exhibiting dramatic pieces there, from the 14th of May to the 14th day of September, during his natural life.

This was giving him a fortune at one stroke; which our author knew how to avail himself of, by immediately purchasing the old premises in the Haymarket (which he had hitherto rented from the executors of Potter the carpenter, who built it in the year 1720), and erecting a new theatre on the same ground.—This house he opened in the May following, 1767, with a new introductory piece called *The Prelude*,* in which he recited with some pleasantry his late misfortune, complimented the munificence of his royal patron, and trusted, for the remuneration of all his cares and expenses, to the protection and favour of the public.

On the 2d of July in the same year, a new mock-heroic tragedy, called *The Tailors*, was performed

* See the Appendix, at the end of the third volume.

at this theatre; but as this piece was not of his own writing, it will be necessary to give a more detailed account of it; particularly as it was both well received by the public, and much approved of by the best critics of that day.

A little before this time there had been great disputes in London between the master-tailors and their journeymen, so as to create a serious alarm among the beaux and changelings of fashion, as well as to become a general town talk. Some anonymous writer, seeing this a good subject for a mock-heroic, and conceiving a plot similar to that of Garth's Dispensary, formed upon it this tragedy, which in reality possessed a singular degree of merit. It was sent to the manager from Dodsley (the bookseller)'s shop for perusal, with an intimation, "that

if he liked it he was at liberty to use it; if not, to return it in the same secret manner in which it came to him."

The manager was too good a judge of humour to let such a genuine *morceau* escape him. He immediately sent a letter to the author, acknowledging the receipt of his tragedy, and assuring him it should be put into rehearsal the very first opportunity: he at the same time wrote a letter to Wilkinson on the subject; from which, as it explains his opinion of it more fully, I shall subjoin the following extract:

"I have a piece of three acts, not my own, which I shall give in the month of May or June next, called *The Tailors*. The subject is a rich one, the dispute between the masters and the journeymen of that respectable profession. It is a parody of the best passages in the *most* favourite plays; conveyed, with great *gravity*, in blank verse. I think you will ap-

pear in it to advantage, and I shall be glad of your assistance. I cannot say I am quite so well as I had reason to expect. I thought myself obliged to give Barry a lift, two critical nights, which injured me extremely; but I am now better, and, except the trifle of a leg, as much yours as ever.

*Nov.* 3. "SAM. FOOTE."

On the 7th of July, 1767, this tragedy came out; the manager taking a principal part himself, which he executed with an uncommon spirit of serious ridicule. The other parts were likewise well distributed; and the whole was introduced to the public by the following pleasant prologue, written by Garrick.

PROLOGUE TO "THE TAILORS."

*(Spoken by Mr. FOOTE.)*

THIS night we add some heroes to our store,
Who never were as heroes seen before.
No blustering Romans, Trojans, Greeks, shall rage;
No knights, arm'd *cap-à-pie*, shall crowd our stage;

Nor shall our Henries, Edwards, take the field,
Opposing sword to sword, and shield to shield:
With different instruments our troop appears;
Needles to thimbles shall, and sheers to sheers,
With parchment gorgets, and in buckram arm'd,
Cold blooded tailors are to heroes warm'd,
And slip-shod slide to war. No lion's glare,
No eye-balls darting fire, shall make you stare:
Each outside shall bely the stuff within,
A Roman spirit in a tailor's skin.
A cross-legg'd Cassius, Pompey, shall you see,
And the *ninth part of* Brutus strut in me.
What though no swords we draw, no daggers shake;
Yet can our warriors a "quietus make
With a bare bodkin." Now be dumb, ye railers,
And never but in honour call out "Tailors!"—
"But are those heroes tragic?" you will cry:
Oh, very tragic; and I'll tell you why.
Should female artists with the male combine,
And mantua-makers to the tailors join;
Should all, too proud to work, their trades give o'er,
*Not to* be softened with the *Six-pence more;*

What horrors would ensue! First you, ye *beaus*,
At once lose all existence with your clothes!
Then you, ye fair, where would be your defence?
This is no golden age of innocence.
Should drunken Bacchanals the Graces meet,
And no police to guard the naked street,
Beauty is weak, and passion bold and strong:
Oh! then,—but modesty restrains my tongue.
May this night's bard a skilful tailor be;
And like a well made coat his tragedy!
Though close, yet easy; decent, but not dull;
Short, but not scanty; without buckram full.

The manager strengthened his company this season by the reinforcement of Mr. and Mrs. Barry; whose tragic performances, mixed with his light summer humour, afforded the public a dramatic alternation to which they had been totally unused at this theatre.

Barry had been nearly ten years absent from the London stage, on an excursion to Ireland; where, for

the sake of wielding an insubstantial truncheon as joint manager with Woodward, he lost much of the prime of life in his profession, as well as what money he might have saved by adhering to his designation here. Thus "shorn of his fortune," but in the meridian of his powers, he arrived in London, the season before, accompanied by Mrs. Dancer, afterwards the celebrated Mrs. Barry; and, not waiting for the return of the winter season, he opened the Opera-house in the Haymarket, with the tragedy of *Othello*, which was afterwards followed up by most of his principal characters.

His long absence made him almost new to the stage; and the long disuse of *Othello*, for want of a competent performer, caused that tragedy to be almost equally new to *the public*: but when they saw the

part filled by so commanding a figure, and with such fascinating powers of expression, they hailed him as not only the restorer of Shakspeare in this play, but as the leading star of his profession. The critics confirmed the public taste; and the Opera-house became for that summer the resort of the gay, the fashionable, and the scientific world.

Foote not only saw all this, but, feeling it to his cost, engaged Mr. and Mrs. Barry for the next season at his own theatre; thus silencing a powerful opposition, and forming an alliance at once both lucrative and respectable.

At the close of the season, the Barrys went off to Drury-lane, where they had a fixed engagement under Garrick; while the manager of the Haymarket, in order to make up for

this great theatrical defection, was obliged to have recourse to his own mental powers. They were propitious to his call; as, early in the summer of 1768, he produced that now well-known and established comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks.*

This excellent little piece, though it admits of some *temporary* strokes, such as the ridicule on the college of physicians, the political doctor, &c.; yet exhibits them worked up in so brilliant and general a manner, as to be always new, and sure of continuing to be relished while there is demand for public satire. It has likewise (what many of his other pieces want) a regular fable interwoven with the incidents, and does not so much depend upon single and detached scenes.

The receipts of this comedy exceeded his most sanguine expecta-

tions. There was little or no demand for any variation in the theatrical bill of fare during the whole season; so that it alone was said to have produced him between three and four thousand pounds. Twelve hundred pounds of this sum he lodged at his banker's, as a deposit for future contingencies; beside five hundred in cash, which he intended to take over with him to Ireland, where he was engaged for the ensuing winter.

His usual *dæmon* of extravagance, however, still haunted him; for, taking Bath in his way to Holyhead, the September following, he fell in with a nest of gamblers (the usual attendants on this fashionable place of resort), who, finding him with full pockets and high spirits, availed themselves of their superior dexterity with considerable success. Several

of the frequenters of the rooms saw this, but it was too common a case for private interference; besides, friendship is not the usual commerce of watering places. At last his friend Rigby*, who happened just then to be at Bath, took an opportunity to tell him how grossly he was plundered; and further remarked, "that from his careless manner of playing and betting, and his habit of telling stories when he should be minding his game, he must in the long run be ruined, let him play with whom he would."

Foote, who perhaps by this time had partly seen his error, but was too proud to take a lesson in the character of *a dupe*, very ridiculously and ungratefully resented this advice. He told his friend with an un-

* The Right Hon. Richard Rigby, then paymaster of the forces.

becoming sharpness, "that although he was no politician by profession, he could see as soon as another into any sinister designs laid against him: that he was too old to be schooled; and that as to any distinction of rank between them to warrant this liberty, he saw none; they were both the king's servants, with this difference in *his* favour,—that he could always draw upon his talents for independence, when perhaps a courtier could not find the king's treasury always open to him for support."

On receiving this return, Rigby, as may be well imagined, made his bow, and walked off; while *the dupe* went on, and not only lost the five hundred pounds which he had about him, but the twelve hundred at his banker's; and thus, stripped of his last guinea, was obliged to borrow

a hundred pounds to carry him to Ireland.

Fortune, however, who was constantly at his heels (though he so often turned her out of doors), veered about once more in his favour on his arrival in Dublin; for his new comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks* did nearly as much for him there as on the boards of the Haymarket. It brought crowded houses every night to the end of the season; the treasury books constantly reporting from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds per night; which, as the expenses of the house were small, and he himself played also upon shares, made his profits very considerable.

He was no less lucky in being under the patronage of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the present *Marquis* Townshend, who knew and

valued him for talents so congenial to his own. His Excellency not only commanded this comedy several times during the winter, but invited the facetious author to court; where, by his wit and sprightly conversation, he ingratiated himself so much with the Irish nobility and gentry (those legitimate sons of gaiety and good-humour), that he soon became as great an attraction at the castle as at the theatre.

Thus recovered in his finances, and further established in his reputation, on his return to London in the spring of 1769 he gave his muse a *fallow* season. One new piece, however, was produced at this theatre in this year (written by the late Isaac Bickerstaff), called *Doctor Last in his Chariot*, as a kind of sequel to *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, and partly taken from *The Malade Ima-*

*ginaire* of Molière. This little entertainment, though it owned the same father as *Love in a Village*, and was ushered in by a very humorous prologue, written by Garrick and spoken by Foote, was very nearly damned the first night: but by alterations, and the support of friends, it dragged on its feeble existence to the ninth, "and then was heard no more." The general business of the theatre, however, succeeded; and as the manager had more time than usual upon his hands, he enjoyed the *otium cum dignitate* at North End, upon an enlarged scale; holding out the strongest excitements to good society, entertainment for both mind and body.

Towards the close of the present summer, an event occurred which engrossed the attention of all *amateurs* of the drama. This was no

less than the intended celebration of a jubilee at Stratford upon Avon, in honour of the memory of our immortal Shakspeare. But as the origin of this grand fête is not generally known, or but imperfectly remembered, and many details were never recorded, it belongs to the plan of these Memoirs to relate them; particularly as they gave rise to a difference between our hero and Garrick, which might have had very disagreeable consequences.

Some time previously to the celebration of this jubilee, a certain clergyman had purchased a property in and about the town of Stratford, in which the house and grounds where Shakspeare resided were included. In the garden belonging to this house was a remarkable mulberry-tree planted by Shakspeare's own hands, and which the inhabitants

looked up to with a kind of religious veneration. The purchaser, however, finding this tree overshadowed his house, and neither dreading the wrath of the offended Muses, nor himself possessing any reverence for our great dramatic bard, one unlucky night most sacrilegiously cut it down.

The alarm of this atrocious deed soon spread throughout the town and the adjacent village. Not the extinction of the vestal fire at old Rome, nor the stealing of the *Palladium* from Troy, could have struck with more grief and astonishment the ancient inhabitants of those places respectively, than were now occasioned in the neighbourhood in question. The men, women, and children, of the town of Stratford, gathered round the house in successive crowds, *beheld* the fallen tree with sighs and

tears, and almost vowed to sacrifice the offender to the injured manes of the immortal planter. In short, such a tumultuous spirit of revenge was excited, that the culprit very prudently quitted the town at once; and the inhabitants came to a resolution, "never to admit any of the same family, or even of the same name, to reside among them."

The mulberry tree was instantly purchased by a carpenter in the neighbourhood: who cut it up, and retailed it, in relics of various shapes; as stand-dishes, tea-chests, medallions, &c. Of these the corporation of Stratford secured the best part; and in a handsome box, made of this wood, they enclosed the freedom of that town to Mr. Garrick, with the following letter, written by their steward:—

*To* DAVID GARRICK, *Esq.*

SIR,

THE corporation of Stratford, ever desirous of expressing their gratitude to all who do honour and justice to the memory of Shakspeare, and highly sensible that no person in any age hath excelled you therein, would think themselves much honoured if you would become one of their body. Though this borough now doth not send members to parliament, perhaps the inhabitants may not be the less virtuous; and to render the freedom of this place the more acceptable to you, the corporation propose to send it in a box, made of that very mulberry tree planted by Shakspeare's own hand.

The story of that valuable relic is too long to be here inserted: but the gentleman who is so obliging as to convey this to you, will acquaint you therewith; as also, that the corporation would be happy in receiving from your hands some statue, bust, or picture of Shakspeare, to be placed within their new town-hall. They would be equally pleased to have some picture of yourself, that the memory of both may be perpetuated together in that place which gave him birth, and where he still lives in the mind of every inhabitant. I am Sir, yours, &c.

The honour here proposed to be conferred on Mr. Garrick, was readily accepted by him; and in the month of May following, the persons deputed by the corporation presented him with the freedom of their borough, accompanied with the following letter:

*To* DAVID GARRICK, *Esq.*

SIR,

THE mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the ancient borough of Stratford upon Avon,—a town that glories in giving birth to the immortal Shakspeare, whose memory you have so highly honoured, and whose conceptions you have so happily expressed,—rejoice in an opportunity of adding their mite to that universal applause your inimitable powers have most justly merited; and, as a mark of their esteem and gratitude, have respectfully transmitted to you the freedom of their borough in a box made from the mulberry tree undoubtedly planted by Shakspeare's own hand, which they hope you will do them the honour of accepting.

By order of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses in common council.

*Stratford upon Avon, May 3, 1769.* (Signed) W. HUNT, Town Clerk.

This flattering and distinguished compliment first suggested to Garrick the idea of a Jubilee: which met the approbation not only of the *literati*, but of the public at large; as no sooner was the time fixed for its celebration, than every one within an hundred miles of the place, who was not prevented by pressing circumstances, prepared for attending this august and classical fête. All summer journeys to friends, all trips to watering places, were for a while suspended; while

"Avon's banks, where flowers eternal blow,"

formed the great resort of all.

Foote, as a professional man and an *amateur*, could not resist mixing in this motley throng; but, either from envy of Garrick's taking the lead in this business, or from thinking that he conducted it with too much *vanity* and self-ostentation, our hero *looked* with a jealous eye upon the

whole, and hence took every little occasion, in squibs, sarcasms, and *bon-mots*, to arraign the projector's taste and management.

This conduct, however, passed off with a laugh on both sides, till the winter following; when, finding that Garrick meant to convert his jubilee into an object of profit, by bringing out a representation of it on the stage, Foote's spleen could be restrained no longer. He played off his powers of ridicule on every part of the subject, both in company and in the public papers; particularly on the *Ode on Erecting a Statue to Shakspeare*, in which he pointed out some errors and inaccuracies with such force of humour, as gained the greatest part of the laughers on his side.

He carried his satire still further; for, finding that the entertainment of *The Stratford Jubilee* ran to nine-

ty nights in that season, his jealousy became so strong, that he intended to bring out a mock procession in imitation of it, and introduce Garrick himself on the stage as the principal figure. In this procession, a man was to be dressed out so as to resemble Garrick as much as possible, in the character of *Steward of the jubilee;* with his wand, white-topped gloves, and the mulberry-tree medallion of Shakspeare hanging at his breast; while some ragamuffin in the procession should address him in the well-known lines of the jubilee poet-laureat:

> "A nation's taste depends on you,
> Perhaps a nation's virtue too;"

to which he was to make no other answer, but clap his arms, like the wings of a cock, and crow out,

*Cock-a-doodle-doo!*

Garrick had early intelligence of *his* whole scheme, and the uneasi-

ness which he felt upon the occasion could not be dissembled. He dreaded public ridicule as the most painful of all misfortunes; and in the hands of such a man as Foote, he apprehended the decay, perhaps the ruin, of that reputation which was ever dear to him, and which he had been raising for so many years. However, suddenly this mighty project fell to the ground. The parties met, as if by accident, at the house of a nobleman, the common friend of both; when, alighting at the same time from their chariots at his lordship's door, and exchanging significant looks at each other, Garrick broke silence first, by asking, "Is it war or peace?"—"Oh! peace, by all means," said the other, with much apparent good will; and the day was spent in great cordiality.

The private reason of this sudden

reconciliation has never yet been generally known. Davis, in his Theatrical Memoirs, is of opinion, that it was occasioned, either by a well-timed gratification on the part of Garrick, or a threat of retaliation in kind on his antagonist: but Davis was rather intent on doing homage to the memory of his departed master, for the sake of getting subscribers to his book, than on doing even common justice to the character of Foote, who, in his lowest declensions of fortune, was well known to have a spirit above the first of these compromises; and as to the other, I believe nothing would have given him greater pleasure, than a contest of ridicule with Garrick, in which point he was so conscious of his own superiority. The fact was (and it is here related from very good authority), that the late Marquis of Staf-

ford, the mutual friend of both, seeing Garrick so very unhappy about this menaced caricature, prevailed upon Foote to abandon the design; and the accidental meeting at this nobleman's house, was the settled signal for accommodation*.

Having thus got rid of this troublesome affair (which, however successful, would not have done much credit to either his talents or private character), he once more resumed his pen, and in the summer of 1770 produced a new comedy called *The Lame Lover*. The principal character (*Sir Luke Limp*), there is reason

* As some apology for Foote's pursuing Garrick with such animosity, it should be stated, that he had some time before this (to meet the expenses of his luxurious kind of living) asked the loan of five hundred pounds from Garrick; which the other readily lent him, but at the same time, it was said, made known the circumstance among their common friends. Foote resented this so indignantly, that he repaid the money, and reserved him as a proper object of his ridicule on the first public occasion.

to believe, was partly intended as a piece of drollery on his own misfortune; but this was worked up with other ingredients of vanity and gallantry, which rendered it a proper object of ridicule. *Serjeant Circuit* too is another fine portrait; and is interlarded with such knowledge of the technicals of the law, as make it, perhaps, the best stage burlesque on that profession. In the pleasantry of this piece, however, consists most of its merit: as the plot is too meagre; and the other characters, though lively and appropriate in the dialogue, bear no strong marks of originality.

A transaction which happened at Bath in the ensuing year, again called out the muse of our author. The following are the leading circumstances of the event here alluded to:—

An old gentleman of good fortune in the neighbourhood of that city, having made honourable professions of love to a young lady of great musical talents, every thing was soon arranged between the parties except the ceremony of the marriage. The sound of this awful word, however, made the gentleman recollect himself; and he wished to be considered no longer as a lover. The friends of the lady, very properly urging "that he should have thought of this before," demanded reparation: which he at first demurred to; but, to avoid the expenses of a law suit, as well as the censures of the world, it was said that he accommodated the matter for a sum of three thousand pounds.

With these materials our author has worked up a very diverting co-

medy, under the title of *The Maid of Bath;* directing his satire, where it should be placed, on the character of the old gentleman, whom he describes under the name of *Flint*—and it would be difficult to point out one drawn with more precision and pleasantry. The parts of *Lady Catherine Coldstream*, *Sir Christopher Cripple*, and *Billy Button*, are also highly finished portraits; and render the piece, independent of its locality, one of the most pleasing in the extensive list of his dramatic productions.

Towards the conclusion of this season, having received a very encouraging invitation to winter in Edinburgh, he prepared for a second trip to Scotland; of which he gives his friend Wilkinson notice in the following humorous letter:—

*To Tate Wilkinson, Esq.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM much obliged to you for the offer of your assistance in the town of Newcastle, but the newspapers have laid out a plan for me that never occurred to myself.

I hope the northern crown sits lightly on your brow; and that your immediate subjects are not only dutiful and observant, but that your whole wide-extended empire pay their taxes largely and cheerfully. I have this summer entertained the veteran Sheridan, who is dwindled into a mere Cock-and-Bottle Chelsea pensioner. He has enlisted some new recruits unfit for service, and such as might be expected to issue from his discipline.

I should be glad to chop in upon you, in my way to Edinburgh; for which place I shall set out about the middle of October. Ross is with me, ill and indolent; but however, thanks to my own industry, the campaign has been happy enough.

Believe me most sincerely yours,

*North-end, August* 16. SAM. FOOTE.

About the end of October he set out for Scotland, and staid there till

the beginning of the March following; but the novelty of his performances being now abated, he by no means succeeded so well as in his first trip. Travelling in winter through a country so mountainous and ill accommodated, did not at all suit a man of his habits of indolence and luxury: he therefore, on the whole, felt himself so mortified and disappointed, that from the following letter he seems to have decided upon making it his last trip northward:—

*To* TATE WILKINSON, *Esq.*

I THANK you, my dear Sir, for your congratulations on my arrival in Scotland; where, by-the-bye, I have encountered more perils than in a voyage to the Indies. Not to mention mountains, precipices, savage cataracts, and more savage men, I was locked up for near a week in a village, dirty, dismal, and desolate, by a deluge of snow.

*I think* of quitting this town in three

weeks; and shall certainly pay my homage to you in your kingdom of York, but not with the least design of becoming your subject: all my campaigns shall end with this place, and my future operations be confined to my own principality. I am glad to find that your theatre stands its ground, though you are so unfortunate as to hobble a little.

I shall let you know, by a line, on what day I shall be likely to see you. I beg my compliments to your amiable queen, and the whole royal brood.

Believe me sincerely yours, &c.

*Edinburgh, Feb.* 16. SAM. FOOTE.

About this time, a general outcry had been raised against several members of the East India company, who, from small beginnings and obscure origins, had raised immense fortunes in a very short period. What made this more disgusting to the public, and particularly to the higher orders of the English, was, that these *new men*, from the extent of their purses, and the extravagance

of their tempers, not only ousted many of the old families from their seats in parliament, but erected palaces about the country, and blazed forth in a style of magnificent living that eclipsed the steadier but less brilliant lights of the hereditary gentry.

On his return from Scotland Foote seized upon this popular subject, so congenial to his own vanity as well as to his talents; and in the summer of 1772 brought out a new comedy called *The Nabob.* In this piece, in the person of *Sir Matthew Mite,* the son of a cheesemonger, who is supposed to have made an immense fortune in the East Indies, he ridicules all the expensive vices and follies generally attached to such a character.

The public gave this portrait to *a gentleman* who had then lately

returned from India, and who had been the son of a cheesemonger. Whether the author in fact particularly alluded to him, I do not exactly know: judging from all the circumstances, I should think not; as, except in the single point of his birth, there was nothing in the person, manners, or address, that in the least resembled the supposed original. However, a party-resentment was roused; and two gentlemen who had been in high situations in the East Indies undertook personally to chastise the author for this insolence.

In pursuance of this design, they furnished themselves with oak cudgels, and sallied out for Suffolk-street, being resolved to make his own house the scene of his chastisement and disgrace. They arrived there about one o'clock; and on their sending up their names, Foote

received them in his drawing-room, with that politeness and urbanity which no man knew better how to practise than himself. This had such an immediate effect upon them, that they thought proper to change their mode of attack, and begin with remonstrance.

On their first entering the room, he saw their purpose, and at the same instant saw the course proper for him to take. He therefore redoubled his politeness, and "hoped the gentlemen would take some coffee, which was ready in the next room, before they opened their business." This, however, was civilly refused: "the business must be first settled." They then began to state "the insult which particular persons of character and fortune had sustained by the licentiousness of his pen; and *for* no other reason, than because

Providence had favoured their industry and adventuring spirit with a suitable remuneration."

They were proceeding in this manner, but rising into choler and irritability every moment, when Foote, gently interrupting them, requested "they would but hear him one word: which was, to beg that they would only state their grievances with temper, till he made his justification; and then, if they were not fully satisfied, he was willing to meet every consequence of their resentment."

This being agreed to, the gentlemen continued the declaration of their grievances at full length. When they had finished, Foote began by assuring them in the most solemn and impressive manner, "that he had no particular person in view as the hero of his comedy: that he

took up his story from popular report; and that as he was by trade a *wholesale popular-monger*, he thought he was perfectly secure from giving offence to individuals, particularly to the *honourable* part of the East India company's servants, by satirizing in a general way those who had acted *otherwise*."

He followed up this apology by taking the manuscript of the comedy out of a drawer near him, which he read to them; and by a happy display of ingenuity, so congenial to his character, he explained so fully to their satisfaction, that it was only *a general* satire on the *unworthy* part of the nabob gentry, that his visitors called for coffee, and sat down to it in the most perfect good humour.

They continued chatting together till about four o'clock; when Foote *begged* the honour of their company

to dinner, "having a small party (he said) to meet him, which he hoped would contribute to their entertainment." They were now too much attracted by the charms of his conversation, to refuse him a request of this nature: they staid to dinner therefore with the greatest pleasure; and felt their gratifications so much increased by the brilliancy of his wit, and the conviviality of his friends, that they did not leave the company till three o'clock in the morning.

The next day they talked of nothing but Foote: his wit, his humour, his politeness, and his hospitality; and how narrowly they had escaped from precipitating themselves into a quarrel, or a law-suit, with such an unoffending pleasant fellow. In short, his peace was not only fully established with the *East*

*India corps*, but they attended his theatre every night, and supported his piece through the whole course of the season *.

Having thus rode his *Nabob* over the course with success and credit, he next year brought out two new pieces: one called *Piety in Pattens*, in which he introduced what he called a primitive puppet-show; the other a comedy of three acts, entitled *The Bankrupt*. The first of these was intended to ridicule a species of writing known under the name of *sentimental comedy*, which was then very much gaining ground upon the stage. This was a sort of *moral essay* thrown into dialogue; which, as it demanded little or no knowledge of

* The above anecdote was supplied by a very near relation of one of the party; who added, that his friend afterwards had Foote often to dine with him at his house in town and in the country, and kept up a friendly *intimacy* with him to the close of our hero's life.

the human character in all the various and contrasted shapes of comic situation, was readily caught at by every smatterer in dramatic knowledge, who thus gained money and reputation without deserving either.

The mass of the public saw the innovation with a kind of indolent pleasure not entirely devoid of self-gratification. It was so much like the light fantastic kind of novel writing which their wives and daughters read in the parlour, that they were thus far critics when they came to the theatre. Having a previous knowledge how a modern love-match should be commenced, entangled, disentangled, and concluded, they became umpires of the drama, instead of mere spectators: and as those pieces were generally well sprinkled with common-place ax-

ioms of morality,—instead of waiting for the hand of criticism to lead them as heretofore, they would now decide at once for themselves; and in their newly acquired censorial character announced, "that the theatre was at *last* become what it ought to be, a public school of virtue and morality."

Dr. Goldsmith was the first to attack this illegitimate species of writing, by his successive productions of *The Good Natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. Our hero followed, with his *Piety in Pattens;* in which he introduces, in the true ballad style, "How *a maiden of low degree*, by the mere effects of morality and virtue, raised herself to riches and honours." These two being supported by other writers, soon laid the ghost of *sentimental comedy;* and John Bull

was once more restored to his usual laugh and good humour.

But it sometimes unfortunately happens in mental, as well as in corporeal diseases, that in curing one species of complaint, unskilful physicians induce another equally dangerous. This was the case in the cure of sentimental comedy. Those writers who succeeded Goldsmith and Foote in their design, but who could not follow them in their talents, perceiving the success of the ridicule against gravity, thought that by making comedy *still more laughable*, it would accommodate more the taste of the public. They, therefore, to banish the style of *The Whole Duty of Man*, and *The Economy of Human Life*, took their model from Joe Miller; whence it resulted, that by a profusion of stale jests clumsily fitted to modern circumstances, and pantomimic

tricks which were called *dramatic situations*, the stage, in general, is even at present so contaminated, that not only our best poets on the stock list are out of fashion, but many men of real dramatic knowledge feel the shame, as well as the risk, of writing under such a degrading and discouraging patronage.

The comedy of *Picty in Pattens* was followed in the same season by *The Bankrupt;* which, as it was first written, was admirably calculated to do credit to the stage, by reprehending and exposing one of the greatest evils which can attach to a commercial country, that of fraudulent bankruptcies. But the well-known Mr. Fordyce happening to fail just before this period, which occasioned such a shock in the mercantile world as to render the year 1772 notori*ously* unfortunate, it was suggested

to our author, that an application of some of the scenes might be made to this unhappy person; and as he really was a man of worth and high connexions, it would be extremely cruel to give room for malice to point him out as the subject of the comedy.

Though there was more of a mistaken good nature than of sound remonstrance in this application, Foote readily listened to it; and immediately altering the ground-work of his plot, rendered the piece what it now appears,—a tissue of detached scenes, without much fable, but blended with some strong delineations of character and temporary allusions, which, if they did not leave the comedy as *useful* as it originally stood, still afforded the public a pleasing dramatic entertainment.

With the success of these pieces,

and at the pressing solicitation of Ryder the Irish manager, Foote set off for Ireland towards the end of October, to perform during the winter season. He arrived there in the November following, accompanied by Weston, Mrs. Jewel, and others; so that, being thus strengthened in the principal parts of his own comedies, he could insure the greater success. He opened with *The Maid of Bath*, which was followed by his last two pieces, and the usual course of his other characters; and was in all most favourably received.

His old patron, Lord Townsend, still continued Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and received him with his usual favour and hospitality. Hence he was a leading object of attraction not only at the theatre, but also at *the* Castle. The levee was uncom-

monly crowded when he was expected to attend: it was considered as a kind of comic rehearsal, where his wit and humour were exerted with universal applause; and his *bon-mots* were afterwards retailed throughout the town with equal satisfaction.

He felt and loved the natural disposition of the Irish, and always visited that country with peculiar gratification. In his journeys to Scotland and other places, his love of indolence often "threw a lion in the way;" but in his trips to Ireland he saw nothing but profit, pleasure, and reputation. In short, the temper of the people was so much in unison with his own, that he felt himself perfectly *at home* among them; and, on the other hand, they were so sensible of his attachment, that they hailed him as one of the patrons of their national character. In return,

he was so gratefully sensible of this regard, that on taking leave of them this season (as if he had a *presentiment* of its being the last), he complimented them in the following lines, which he spoke as a prologue to his comedy of the *Nabob:*

See! frugal Nature, with an equal hand,
Bestows peculiar gifts on every land.
To France she gave the rapid repartee,
Bows, and *bon-mots*, fibs, fashions, flattery,
Shrugs, grins, grimace, and sportive gaiety.
Arm'd with the whole artillery of love,
Latium's soft sons possess the power to move.
Humour, the foremost of the festive crew,
Source of the comic scene, she gave to *you:*
Humour, with arched brow, and leering eye,
Shrewd, solemn, sneering, subtle, slow, and sly,
Serious herself, yet laughter still provoking,
By teasing, tickling, jeering, gibing, joking.
Impartial gift! that owns nor rank nor birth;
'Tis theirs who rule the helm, or till the earth;
Theirs who in senates wage the wordy war,
And theirs whose humble lot conducts the car;

If ought deriv'd from her adorns my strain,
*You* gave—at least, discover'd first—the vein *.

On his return to London, early in the spring of 1774, he brought with him a comedy, called *The Cozeners*, which he previously sent to Garrick for perusal. The latter was so flattered with this condescension, that, forgetting all the circumstances of the Jubilee, and other little matters of irritation, he wrote the following prologue for it, which was spoken by Foote himself on the first night of its representation.

PROLOGUE TO "THE COZENERS."

IN trifling works of fancy, wits agree
That nothing tickles like a simile;

* He used often to say, the difference between an Irishman and a Scotchman in relishing a joke was, that the former laughed too soon, and the other too late; as it was no uncommon thing for a Scotchman to be one hour in finding out the jest, and a second in rousing up his faculties to enjoy it.

So then, by way of turning you to laughter
(With which, I hope, you'll tickle us hereafter),
From our poetic store-house we produce
A couple, spick and span, for present use.
Dramatic writers were, like watchmen, meant
To knock down vice: few answer the intent.
Both should be quick to see and seize their game;
But both are sometimes blind, and sometimes lame.
Can those cry, "Stand!" while they themselves are reeling?
Can those "Stop thief!" while they themselves are stealing?
When wanted most, the watch a nap will take:—
Are all our comic authors quite awake?
Or, what is worse, (by which they still come near 'em,)
Are you not more than half asleep, who hear 'em?
I, your old watchman, here have fix'd my stand,
On many a vice and folly laid my hand:
'Twas you cried "Watch!" I limp'd at your command.
*Let me*, like other watchmen, bless the times,
*And take* the privilege to nod betimes:

Nor let your frowns now force me, in a fright,
To cry "Past seven o'clock, and a CLOUDY night!"
But, with your patience not to be too free,
We'll change the subject, and the simile.
To chase a smuggling crew who law deride,
We launch a cutter of three guns this tide.
With your assistance, we will make the foe
Sink, or submit to *Captain Timbertoe.*
Ye pirate critics, fall not foul of me;
If once I sink, I founder on the sea:
In this condition (*showing his artificial leg*) can I swim to shore?
I'm *cork*, 'tis true; but then, I want an *oar.*
Besides, 'tis dangerous, I find, to steep
Myself and ship in brine twelve fathom deep;
My chin I'd rather above water keep.
You oft have sav'd my little bark from sinking:
I am no fish;—save me from *water drinking!*

This comedy met with considerable success: and it was generally thought that in the character of *Mr. Simony* he alluded to the late Dr. Dodd; who had even then given

some unhappy specimens of his private character, by writing a letter to the Lord Chancellor, offering him a bribe for the presentation to a rich living, for which conduct he was very justly struck off the list of king's chaplains.

That our author pointed his satire with some propriety to this direction, afterwards more fully appeared in the fate of that divine; who, with all the advantages of a polite education, with a pleasing person and address, followed and beloved for his professional abilities, and under the immediate patronage of an eminent nobleman, yet fell a judicial victim to the syrens Fashion and Dissipation.

Before we relinquish this account of Dr. Dodd, it may perhaps be useful in other respects besides the *mere* purposes of biography, to re-

late the following anecdote, which has never yet been made public :—

The day after the Doctor was convicted at the Old Bailey of the crime for which he afterwards suffered (a crime which, he must have known, can never afford even a hope for the royal mercy in this commercial country), he sent a note to the late Mr. William Woodfall, the original printer of the Morning Chronicle, requesting the favour of speaking to him on a very particular subject. This must have been a distressing summons to any one, but more particularly to a man of Woodfall's humanity: not to go, would be unkind; to go, would be incurring a scene of distress painful to his feelings. But Woodfall could never hesitate on a question of active and disinterested friendship: and he has-

tened to Newgate on the very morning of receiving the invitation.

On entering the apartment where the Doctor sat, he found it impossible to avoid taking some notice of his unhappy situation; but as he was commiserating it in an embarrassed, sympathizing manner, the Doctor, with great apparent composure, interrupted him, by saying, "Oh! Mr. Woodfall, this is not the business I sent for you about. Sit down, and I will explain.—Though I have not the pleasure of personally knowing you, I am not unacquainted with the line of your professional business; which, I understand, engages you much in the habits of the theatres, the managers, and theatrical pursuits in general. I likewise have a particular respect for your judg*ment* in those matters; and on this

account, I think you can be of some service to me."—Here the other offering his civilities, the Doctor proceeded. "You must know, then, that being in my earlier days, like yourself, a lover of the drama, I sketched out a comedy, the hint of which I took from the story of Sir Roger de Coverley in the Spectator. This piece I have finished, *since my residence in Newgate;* and if you will be so good as to revise it, and give me your interest with the manager, I shall feel myself much obliged to you."

Mr. Woodfall, finding himself relieved by the conference taking so different and unexpected a turn, instantly acceded to this proposal, took the manuscript away with him, suggested some alterations, which the Doctor readily complied with, and

afterwards corresponded with him on this subject till the week before his execution.

Such is the anecdote which is here given on the authority of Woodfall himself; a man of unquestionable veracity.

We have now arrived to a period of our hero's life, when we are no longer permitted to range through the flowery walks of wit and pleasantry, but are constrained to shift the scene to the representation of more serious and gloomy incidents.

Ever on the wing for novelty in the line of his profession, he fastened on a certain lady of high rank*, at that time much talked of for her general eccentricities. Such a subject he thought fair game for his pencil, and he set himself to work in draw-

* The celebrated Duchess of Kingston.

ing her portrait about the latter end of the summer of 1775. The comedy in which she was to be introduced, was called *The Trip to Calais;* in which, under the character of *Lady Kitty Crocodile,* he had given such a picture of hypocrisy, intrigue, and oppression, as very rarely could be found to concentrate in one person.

This design (as was his usual careless habit) he mentioned to all his friends and acquaintances indiscriminately; and even introduced some parts of the principal character into conversation, to the no small amusement of himself and his companions. This, at length, reached the ears of the lady herself; who was so tremblingly alive to every thing which trenched on her fair fame and character, that she rallied her numerous

friends on every side, to prevent the dreaded exposure on the stage. Their remonstrances at last prevailed with the Lord Chamberlain; which occasioned the following spirited letter of remonstrance from our hero:

MY LORD,

I DID intend troubling your Lordship with an earlier address; but the day after I received your prohibitory mandate, I had the honour of a visit from Lord Mountstuart, to whose interposition I find I am indebted for your first commands, relative to *The Trip to Calais*, by Mr. Chetwynd; and your final rejection of it, by Colonel Keen.

Lord Mountstuart has, I presume, told your Lordship, that he read with me those scenes to which your Lordship objected; that he found them collected from general nature, and applicable to none but those who, through consciousness, were compelled to a self-application. To such minds, my Lord, *The Whole Duty of Man*, next to the sacred writings, is the severest satire that ever was written; and to the same mark if Comedy directs not her *aim*, her arrows are shot in the air; for

by what touches no man, no man will be amended.

Lord Mountstuart desired that I would suffer him to take the play with him, and let him leave it with the Duchess of Kingston. He had my consent, my Lord; and at the same time an assurance, that I was willing to make any alteration that her Grace would suggest. Her Grace saw the play; and, in consequence, I had an interview with her Grace. With the result of that interview I shall not at this time trouble your Lordship. It may, perhaps, be necessary to observe, that her Grace could not discern (which your Lordship, I dare say, will readily believe) a single trait in the character of *Lady Kitty Crocodile* that resembled herself.

After this representation, your Lordship will, I doubt not, permit me to enjoy the fruits of my labour; nor will you think it reasonable, that because a capricious individual has taken it into her head that I have pinned her ruffle awry, I should be punished by a poniard struck deep in my heart. Your Lordship has too much candour and justice to be the means of giving so violent and ill-directed a blow.

Your Lordship's determination is not only of the greatest importance to me now, but

must inevitably decide my fate for the future; as, after this defeat, it will be impossible for me to muster up courage enough to face Folly again. Between the Muse and the Magistrate there is a natural confederacy: what the last cannot punish, the first often corrects: but when she not only finds herself deserted by her ancient ally, but sees him armed in the defence of her foe, she has nothing left but a speedy retreat.

In that case, adieu, my Lord, to the stage! *Valeat res ludicra!*—to which I hope I may with justice add, *Plaudite!*—as, during my continuance in the service of the public, I never profited by flattering their passions, or falling in with their humours. Upon all occasions I have exerted my little powers (as indeed I thought it my duty) in exposing follies, how much soever the favourites of the day; and pernicious prejudices, however protected and popular. This, my Lord, has been done (if those may be believed who have the best right to know) sometimes with success. Let me add, too, that in doing this I never lost my credit with the public: because they knew I proceeded upon principle; that I disdained either being the echo, or the instrument of any man, however exalted his *station*; and that I never received reward, or

protection, from any other hands than their own.

I have the honour to be, &c.

SAM. FOOTE.

Receiving no satisfactory answer to this application, he soon after came to the resolution of suppressing the comedy; and wrote the following letter to her Grace, informing her of his decision:—

MADAM,

A MEMBER of the privy council, and a friend of your Grace's, (he has begged me not to mention his name, but I suppose your Grace will easily guess him,) has just left me. He has explained to me (what I did not conceive), that the publication of the scenes in *The Trip to Calais* at this juncture, with the dedication and preface, might be of infinite ill consequence to your affairs.

I really, Madam, wish you no ill, and should be sorry to do you an injury. I therefore give up that consideration, which neither *your Grace's offers*, nor the threats of your agents, could obtain. The scenes shall not be published; nor shall any thing ap-

pear at my Theatre, or from me, that can hurt you*, PROVIDED the attacks made on me in the newspapers do not make it necessary for me to act in defence of myself. Your Grace will therefore see the necessity of giving proper directions.

I have the honour to be, &c.

*North-end,* SAM. FOOTE.
*Sunday, August* 13, 1775.

To this letter a servant of her Grace's was directed to write the following *curious* answer:—

SIR,

I WAS at dinner when I received your ill-judged letter. As there is little consideration

* Notwithstanding this declaration, with others still stronger, personally addressed to her Grace, and Foote's well-known contempt for money (particularly to be thus obtained), it is but doing justice to all parties to record, that it was stated at that time, that the Rev. John Foster had made an affidavit before Sir John Fielding, importing that, after some conversation with Mr. Foote on the impropriety of publishing the piece in question, Mr. Foote said, that unless the Duchess of Kingston would give him *two thousand pounds*, he would publish *The Trip to Calais*, with a preface and dedication to her Grace.

required, I shall sacrifice a few moments to answer it.

A member of *your* privy council can never hope to be of a Lady's cabinet*. I know too well what is due to my own dignity, to enter into a compromise with an extortionable assassin of private reputation. If I before abhorred you for your slander, I now despise you for your concessions. It is a proof of the illiberality of your satire, when you can publish, or suppress it as best suits the needy convenience of your purse. You first had the cowardly baseness to draw the sword; and if I sheathe it until I make you crouch like the subservient vassal as you are, then is there not spirit in an injured woman, nor meanness in a slanderous buffoon.

To a man, my sex alone would have screened me from attack; but I am writing to the descendant of a Merry Andrew, and prostitute the term of manhood by applying it to Mr. Foote.

Clothed in my innocence as in a coat of mail, I am proof against a host of foes; and, conscious of never having intentionally offended a single individual, I doubt not that a brave and generous public will protect me

* This is an inuendo pointing to the circumstances of the prosecution against him, noticed in page 224.

from the malevolence of a theatrical assassin. You shall have cause to remember, that though I would have given liberally for the relief of your necessities, I scorn to be bullied into a purchase of your silence.

There is something however in your *pity* at which my nature revolts. To make an offer of pity, at once betrays your insolence and your vanity. I will keep the *pity* you send, until the morning before you are turned off: when I will return it by a Cupid, with a box of lip-salve; and a choir of choristers shall chaunt a stave to your *requiem*.

*Kingston House,*
*Sunday, 13th August.*

E. KINGSTON.

To this letter Foote immediately replied in these terms:—

MADAM,

THOUGH I have neither time nor inclination to answer the illiberal attacks of your agents, yet a public correspondence with your Grace is too great an honour for me to decline.

I cannot help thinking that it would have been prudent in your Grace to have answered *my letter before dinner*, or at least postponed *it to the* cool hour of the morning: you

would then have found that I had voluntarily granted the request which you had endeavoured by so many different ways to obtain.

Lord Mountstuart (for whose amiable qualities I have the highest respect, and whose name your agents very unnecessarily produced to the public) must recollect, that when I had the honour to meet him at Kingston-house by your Grace's appointment, instead of begging relief from your charity, *I rejected your splendid offers* to suppress *The Trip to Calais*, with the contempt they deserved *. Indeed, Madam, the humanity of my royal and benevolent master, and the public protection, have placed me much above the reach of your bounty.

But why, Madam, put on your *coat of mail* against me? I have no hostile intentions. Folly, not vice, is the game I pursue. In those scenes which you so unaccountably apply to yourself, you must observe there is not the slightest hint at the little incidents of your life which have excited the *curiosity*

* It is impossible to reconcile this statement (the truth of which he brings forward so respectable a nobleman as Lord Mountstuart to evidence,) with the Rev. Mr. Foster's affidavit, mentioned in the note page 203; or, at this distance of time, to ascertain the real fact.

of the grand inquest for the county of Middlesex. I am happy however, Madam, to hear that your robe of innocence is in such perfect repair: I was afraid it might be a little the worse for wearing. May it hold out to keep your Grace warm the next winter*.

The progenitors your Grace has done me the honour to give me, are, I presume, merely metaphorical persons; and to be considered as the authors of my muse, and not of my manhood. A Merry Andrew and a prostitute are no bad poetical parents, especially for a writer of plays: the first, to give the humour and mirth; the last, to furnish the graces and powers of attraction. Prostitutes, and players too, must live by pleasing the public; not but your Grace may have heard of ladies who by *private practice* have accumulated great fortunes.

If you mean that I really owe my birth to that pleasant connection, your Grace is grossly deceived. My father was, in truth, a very useful magistrate, and respectable country gentleman, as the whole county of Cornwall will tell you: my mother, the daughter of Sir Edward Goodere, baronet, who repre-

* Alluding to her Grace's trial for bigamy, before *the House* of Peers, which was then depending.

sented the county of Hereford. Her fortune was large, and her morals irreproachable till your Grace condescended to stain them. She was upwards of fourscore years old when she died; and, what will surprise your Grace, *was never married but once* in her life.

I am obliged to your Grace for your intended present "on the day" (as you *politely* express it) "when I am to be turned off." But where will your Grace get the *Cupid* to bring me the lip-salve? That family, I am afraid, has long quitted *your* service.

Pray, Madam, is not J——n* the name of your *female* confidential secretary? and is not *she* generally clothed in black petticoats made of your weeds?

"So mourn'd the dame of Ephesus her love!"

I fancy your Grace took the hint when

* A clergyman of the name of Jackson, better known by the assumed title of Doctor Jackson, who had for many years supported himself partly as an editor of a newspaper in London, and always by a life of shift and expediency. He at this time mostly resided at Kingston-house, and was supposed to be of her Grace's *cabinet council*. This man, after going through a variety of adventures incident to such characters, at last settled in Ireland: where his restless and intriguing spirit led him to join the rebellion in that kingdom in the year 1797, for which he was tried and found guilty; but saved himself the disgrace of a public execution, by taking poison the night before his receiving sentence of death.

you ast resided at Rome. You heard then, I suppose, of a certain pope; and in humble imitation, have converted a *pious parson* into a *chamber-maid.* The scheme is new in this country; and has, doubtless, its particular pleasures. That you may *never want the benefit of the clergy* in every emergence, is the sincere wish of

Your Grace's most devoted,
Most obliged humble servant,
SAM. FOOTE.

Thus ended this singular epistolary correspondence: in which though our hero had evidently the advantage, he was obliged to forego the representation of his comedy; which gave him no little mortification, as it affected both his profits and his resentments. He had at one time formed a scheme, that as he was prevented from exposing her on the stage, he would exhibit her to a much higher tribunal, the great body of the people, by having hand-*bills* publicly distributed between

Hyde-park corner and Kingston-house, in the form of an execution narrative, as follows:

Setting forth the birth, parentage, education, and exaltation of *Lady Kitty Crocodile:* who, from a private station, first became an attendant upon a great lady at court, afterwards married an admiral in the British fleet, was the favourite sultana of several crowned heads abroad; and lastly, married a most noble and illustrious duke, by whom she became possessed of a large fortune, great rank, high connections, &c. &c.

As we might suppose this wild plan to have been the sudden suggestion of resentment, he was easily prevailed upon by his friends to relinquish it. They represented to him that this would be a vulgar and injudicious common vehicle of abuse; as, whatever pain of mind it might give his antagonist, it must at the same time reflect an equal degree of disgrace upon his own character and

understanding: that his satire would be directed to a much better purpose, to level it at her *adviser*;* to whom, perhaps, the whole of her conduct in this affair may be attributed, and whom the public would readily acknowledge a proper subject of exposure and reprehension.

He was convinced by this reasoning; and accordingly expunged the objectionable scenes from *The Trip to Calais,* and brought it out early in the next summer, under the new title of *The Capuchin.* The plot and business of the original undoubtedly suffered from this alteration; yet, by transferring his satire from *Lady Kitty Crocodile* to *Doctor Viper* (alias *Jackson,*), he has made ample amends. But that the reader may be enabled, in some respect, to judge for himself, the following

* Jackson.

scene between Doctor *Viper* and *O'Donnovan* is here transcribed; which, for natural developement of character and pointed dialogue, it would be difficult to parallel.

*Viper (aside).* The wind is veering; and when it comes fair, my old knight within will be for hieing homewards by the very first ship. Let me see: can I hit on no scheme to give him one little squeeze more? To be sure, what with tailors, *traiteurs*, toymen, the girl, and the gaming table, my trip to Paris has turned out pretty well. One smart parting blow I should be glad to——

*O'Donnovan.* Save you, good Sir!

*Viper.* D—n those barefooted beggars: a set of lazy, lubberly,—you may as well shift your ground, father; you'll get nothing from me.

*O'Donnovan.* Be it ever so little; we have nothing but the benevolence of good christian peo——Heyday! why, sure it can't be! By my shoul but it is, sure enough. What! Doctor Viper! who expected to see you at Calais?

*Viper.* Pray, honest friend, when did our acquaintance commence?

*O'Donnovan.* It is not of a very long standing. Come, do shake your memory a little bit, Doctor, and you will soon recollect me.

*Viper.* It will be to no purpose.

*O'Donnovan.* I warrant. Surely, my dear honey, when you were the *doer* of the Scandalous Chronicle, was I not *death hunter* to the very same paper.

*Viper.* Hey! why, you can't be Phelim O'Flam?

*O'Donnovan.* Not now; but I was about twelve months ago.

*Viper.* What could induce you to turn Capuchin?

*O'Donnovan.* A few murders only.

*Viper.* Murders!

*O'Donnovan.* Yes; in order to pay off my lodging, I killed a couple dozen of people that happened to be alive, and in good health, so the printer would employ me no longer.

*Viper.* Aye; I told you, O'Flam, what would happen: why, you became a perfect Drawcansir; and put more people to death than any three physicians in London.

*O'Donnovan.* And what then, Doctor Viper? Sure your poisonous pen did more mischief than me. My *dead* men walked about *afterwards*, and did their business, as if no*thing* at all had happened; while the stabs

made on people's good name by your rancour and malice, will admit of no consolation.

*Viper.* How is this?

*O'Donnovan.* In short, my dear Doctor, the only difference between us is this: my dead men are all alive, and your live men had much better be dead.

*Viper.* Do you know, sirrah, to whom you are speaking?

*O'Donnovan.* Oh! you may say that, my dear honey; from the top to the bottom, every inch and cranny of you.

*Viper.* Pay the proper respect to my cloth.

*O'Donnovan.* What is it you mane? Is it a priest that you are?

*Viper.* Without doubt.

*O'Donnovan.* Then, upon my sheul, it must be of your own ordination, like Mr. Melchisedeck. A priest!—I'll wager you my frock against the price of a mass, that you can't tell how many the thirty-nine articles are.

*Viper.* An impudent, audacious——

*O'Donnovan.* What, because you was parish-clerk to the Moravian meeting-house in the Old Jewry, and used to snuffle out their indecent hymns to the tune of filthy ballads and jigs; and from thence you got expelled for robbing the poor-box.

*Viper.* What, me?

*O'Donnovan.* Then you became advertisement-sticker to lottery-offices, auctioneers, stage coaches, and mountebank doctors; but being detected in selling the bills for waste paper to grocers, you got your dismissal, you know.

*Viper.* Rascal! I know!

*O'Donnovan.* After that, you turned swindler; and got out of gaol by an act for the relief of insolvent debtors.

*Viper.* Many honest men have been in the same situation.

*O'Donnovan.* O yea! lave honesty out of the case, if you plase. Then you became *doer* of the Scandalous Chronicle, mowed down reputations like muck, pushed yourself into the pay of Lady Deborah Dripping, produced anonymous paragraphs against her of your own composition, and got paid by her for not putting them into your paper.

*Viper (aside).* Where the devil could the fellow collect all this story?

*O'Donnovan.* Now from here I suppose you will soon return home a fugitive, and pay your old debts by a new act of parliament.

*Viper.* Well, but Mr. O'Flam,——

*O'Donnovan.* O'Donnovan, if you plase. So you see, Dr. Viper, you are pretty well

known; and all your friends and acquaintance in this town shall soon know you as well as I.

*Viper.* The devil! Well, but my dear friend, what can be the meaning of this? why should we two quarrel?

*O'Donnovan.* Whose fault was it, Doctor, I pray?

*Viper.* Fault! Nobody's fault. I was a little forgetful, that's all. What! we have been connected before, and why should we not now? Ours is a natural alliance; we are poor dogs, and rich men are our game.

*O'Donnovan.* Nay, for the matter of that, I have no objection to hunt in couples.

*Viper.* That's right. Come: let's in, my friend, and drown all animosity in a bottle of Burgundy. [*Exeunt.*

Such a public exhibition must, to a man of Jackson's deep designs, be very mortifying. It, in some degree, would deprive him of his usual means of subsistence; for when the real character of an impostor is discovered and exposed, his art is at a stand, and all the mysteries of in-

trigue and duplicity vanish. Jackson felt this; but his sensations operated in a manner congenial to such a heart, by driving him to meditate a species of revenge which nothing but the most diabolical malice could suggest.

From the first report of Foote's *Trip to Calais* being in contemplation, obscure hints and inuendoes appeared occasionally in the newspapers, relative to his private character; which, from various circumstances, as from their particularly appearing in the newspaper of which Jackson was editor, the public unanimously attributed to this man. On the representation of *The Capuchin*, this plan of calumny began to assume a more settled form; and a report was industriously circulated about the town, that a charge would soon be brought forward in a judi-

cial form against the manager of the Haymarket Theatre for an attempt to commit a very odious assault.

How far any body was concerned with Jackson in this horrid scheme, cannot now be determined: the public opinion of that day strongly implicated his noble patroness; and what partly gave a sanction to this idea was, that Jackson had not the pecuniary means of carrying on such a prosecution himself, by defraying the mere necessary legal expenses, much less by giving to the business that importance which it evidently bore from the very commencement. The report however, such as it was, spread from day to day; and as Foote had several enemies, occasioned by the lashes of his satirical pen, they formed a kind of coalition with the parti-

zans of Jackson; and nothing was talked of but the utter downfal of the manager, the shutting up of his Theatre, &c.

Foote, as may well be imagined, felt much embarrassed under this load of obloquy, and for some time hesitated what to do. He took the advice of a select party of his friends; who were unanimous for his opening the Theatre at the usual time, and throwing himself on the protection of the public.

Accordingly, on the 20th of May, 1776, the house was opened for that season, with the comedy of *The Bankrupt;* which was attended by a crowded audience, including most of the men of rank and letters in town. Many of the boxes too had been taken by ladies of the first distinction; but on their appearance *the galleries* made a dreadful noise,

accompanied by some indecorous expressions, which obliged them immediately to retire—a conduct for which they were much applauded by the whole house.

When the curtain drew up, Foote came forward, and was received with prodigious shouts of applause, a few hisses from the corners of the galleries excepted: however, these being soon silenced, and order restored, he addressed the audience in the following manner:—

GENTLEMEN,

It was not my intention, after the charge that has been made against me, to appear before the public till I had an opportunity of proving my innocence; but as this charge was made at the critical point of time when I usually opened my Theatre, and having engaged as good a set of performers for your amusement as I could procure, it was the unanimous advice of my friends, that I should open my house, in confidence that the public

were too noble, and too just, to discard an old servant for a mere accusation.

I am ready to answer every charge which can be brought against me; and have pursued such legal steps to clear my reputation from the virulent attacks of a public paper as will speedily bring the writer to an issue in the court of King's Bench, which has this day made the rule absolute against the publisher.

I beg leave to return my thanks for the marks you have now given me of your humanity and justice: permit me to promise you, that I will never disgrace your protection.

His situation called forth his sensibilities very powerfully; and a great majority of the audience honoured him, both at that moment, and throughout the whole course of the comedy, with the most unbounded applause.

The plan, however, was too deeply laid to be abandoned for this temporary check: and it now began to

develope itself in form and substance. Foote had, for some time previously to this period, turned off his coachman for repeated irregularities; and this discarded servant was now thought of by Jackson as a proper instrument for giving effect to his detestable scheme. The man had been a considerable time out of place without making any complaint whatever of his master; but suddenly he declared himself under the necessity of *doing justice to the public*, by bringing forward against him a charge of the most infamous kind; and which, whether founded, or unfounded, must embitter the whole remainder of his life.

All the circumstances attending the execution of this design, were every day unremittingly noticed and commented upon in the paper which Jackson edited, till at last the affair

assumed a legal form. On Monday the 8th of July, the coachman, accompanied by his reverend counsellor (Doctor Jackson), attended the grand jury at Hicks's Hall, and there preferred a bill of indictment against Foote for a detestable misdemeanor.

As soon as the bill was found (which is a proceeding that depends solely upon the evidence *in support* of the charge), Mr. Chetwood, as counsel for the prosecution, contrary to the usual custom and practice of the court, moved for a bench warrant to apprehend the defendant; which, as the chairman of the sessions and his brethren had no legal authority to refuse it, was granted, and an attorney and constable were instantly dispatched to put it in execution.

Fortunately for the defendant, *having* accidentally heard of this cir-

cumstance, he instantly went to Hicks's Hall, accompanied by three respectable friends, and obtained a *supersedeas* to the warrant, his friends entering into separate recognizances of bail for his appearance. The prosecutors, ignorant of this proceeding, attempted to put the warrant in execution on the defendant's return to his own house; which evidently showed their design was to seize him unawares, and, by thus preventing his personal exertions in his profession, do him the most essential injury.

Prompted by the same spirit of revenge, and by way of "making assurance double sure," the same parties attended at Hicks's Hall on the Thursday following, and there preferred another indictment (similar in charges, but only changing the *place*), which was likewise found by

the grand jury as a true bill, for the reason assigned above. The defendant's attorney on this, by a writ of *certiorari*, removed the whole cause into the Court of King's Bench, which consequently quashed the recognizances already entered into on this proceeding.

It was now under judicial consideration, whether a man high in the estimation of the public for splendid talents and professional abilities, patronised by the great and learned, and in the direct road to fortune, should be dragged from this proud eminence, and consigned at once to contempt and infamy; or whether the whole charge would turn out a base fabrication, the offspring of malice and revenge. The pause was awful in the extreme to a man of the least sensibility; for, h owever conscious he might be of his innocence,

the accusation was of that nature which, in the eye of the world, operates with peculiar severity against even the connections of the person accused, and, by this means, too often leaves him unfriended and totally helpless.

But, to the honour of human nature, the very reverse was the case in the present instance. Our hero was so far from being abandoned, that his house, from the first moment of the charge being preferred against him, to the close of the trial, exhibited a continual assemblage of rank, learning, fashion, and friendship. Among the two former classes particularly, are to be numbered two royal Dukes, the late Duke of Roxburgh, the Marquis of Townshend, Mr. Dunning (afterwards Lord Ashburton), Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Fitzher-

bert, beside several foreign noblemen, and a group of other persons of the very first respectability.

They reasoned, with a dignity becoming their high characters, and with a feeling common to all: "That if loose charges of this abominable nature were once permitted quietly to take footing in the practice of the world, and to prevent friendship from supporting and rallying round the accused person, no man who kept male servants in his house would be safe from such calumny; as, from their habits of attending their masters at all hours, and in every situation, they would have opportunities to invent any story they might choose, on their being turned out of place, or meeting any other disappointment *in* their expectations, or demands. *They* might even, from their familiar

situation, in time become mere instruments in the hands of others; who, seeing this easy road to vilify and ruin respectable characters, might suborn servants for the absolute purposes of carrying on their abominable schemes of interest, or revenge."

After an interval of a few months, the trial commenced, in the court of King's Bench, before Lord Mansfield and a special jury.

The principal and only evidence was the coachman; who, in particular, positively swore *to the point of time* which he chose to assign as the period of this assault.

On cross-examination, however, it appeared that the very day to which he swore was the 15th of May, which, he said, was the day of opening the theatre for the season; whereas it was proved on the

oaths of several of the performers, that the Haymarket Theatre did not open that season till the 22d of May. It likewise came out, that the prosecutor had been dismissed from the service of the defendant a considerable time before preferring the charge; and that the money for carrying on the prosecution was supplied by the Rev. Dr. Jackson, who was not only his cashier on this occasion, but his principal adviser and director.

Mr. Dunning made a very able defence for the defendant: in which he pointed out, with his usual accuracy and eloquence, the grossness, the malice, and strong improbability, of the charge; which he carried home to the prosecutors both avowed and concealed, with all the asperity of his wit and irony. But *there* seemed to be very little neces-

sity for this exertion of argument, except to expose the turpitude of the prosecution; as the court and jury were perfectly satisfied on the point; and the latter, without even leaving the box, returned their verdict of *Not Guilty*.

Though Foote had many respectable persons much interested in his behalf, none seemed more anxious than his old friend, and fellow labourer in the dramatic vineyard, the late Mr. Murphy; who, as soon as the trial was over, took a coach, and drove to Foote's house in Suffolk-street, Charing-cross, to be the first messenger of the good tidings.

Foote had been looking out of the window, in anxious expectation of such a message. Murphy, as soon as he perceived him, waved his hat in token of victory; and jumping

out of the coach, ran up stairs to pay his personal congratulations: but alas! instead of meeting his old friend in all the exultation of high spirits on this occasion, he saw him extended on the floor, in strong hysterics; in which state he continued near an hour before he could be recovered to any kind of recollection of himself, or the object of his friend's visit.

On the return of his senses, finding himself honourably acquitted, he received the congratulations of his friends and numerous acquaintances, and seemed to be relieved from those pangs of uncertainty and suspense which must have weighed down the firmest spirits on so trying an occasion. But the stigma of the charge still lingered in his mind; and one or two illi*beral* allusions to it, which were made

by some unfeeling people, preyed deeply on his heart. The man who for so many years had basked in the sunshine of public favour, who was to live in a round of wit and gaiety "or not to live at all," was ill calculated to be at the mercy of every coarse fool, or inhuman enemy.

He himself was the first to perceive this change in his constitution, and to provide for the consequences: he therefore determined to secure an annuity for his life, independent of professional labours; and for this purpose disposed of his patent in the Haymarket theatre to the late George Colman, Esq. on the 16th January, 1777. By the terms of this agreement, Mr. Colman obliged himself to pay to him a clear annuity of sixteen hundred pounds by quarterly payments, together with a specific sum for the

right of acting all his unpublished pieces. Foote, on the other hand, agreed to put Colman in immediate possession of his premises; engaging at the same time, not only to give him the refusal of all such dramatic writings as he might himself produce, but also to perform on no other stage in London than that of the Haymarket.

According to this arrangement, the theatre opened in the May following, under the sole management of Mr. Colman; and in a few nights afterwards Foote made his first appearance as a performer only, in his comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks*. But "what a falling off was there!" The mental anxieties which he had suffered during the course of the last year, had evidently preyed upon every part of *him*: his cheeks were lank and wi-

thered, his eyes had lost all their wonted intelligence, and his whole person appeared sunk and emaciated.

His friends, and the impartial part of the audience, cheered him with their unbounded applause; while a few of another description, who still pursued him, interspersed their hisses. He rallied, however, a little in the course of the play; but the public seemed to accept his services rather in remembrance of what he had been, than for what he then was. He afterwards, at intervals during that season, appeared in three or four of his other characters with the same kind of success; when, being seized with a paralytic stroke while performing his favourite part in *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, he was under the necessity of relinquishing his engagements at the Haymarket, and

spent the remainder of the summer at Brighthelmstone.

Having in some degree recovered his health and spirits at this place, he was advised by his physicians to try the south of France during the winter; and, with this intent, reached Dover on the 20th of October 1777, in his way to Calais. The wind proving unfavourable on that day, and his spirits recovering a little of their usual tone, he played off a number of whimsical sallies of humour, of which the following may serve as an instance:—

On his going into the kitchen of the Inn, to order a particular dish for dinner, the cook, understanding that he was about to embark for France, (and perhaps willing to have a satirical stroke at French travellers,) was bragging that, for her

part, she was never once out of her own country. Foote, who had humour of every kind ready on all occasions, instantly replied, "Why, cookey, that's very extraordinary; as they tell me above stairs that you have been several times *all over grease*" (Greece).—"They may say what they please above stairs, or below stairs," replied the cook, "but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life."—"Nay, now, that must be a fib," said Foote, "for I have myself seen you at *spit-head*." The servants by this time caught the joke, and a roar of laughter ran round the kitchen; in which he joined as hearty as the best of them, and which ended in his giving them a crown to drink his health, and a good voyage.

Providence however had determined otherwise. This flash of mer-